

PATRIOT ACT II • NORTH KOREA • POETS AGAINST THE WAR

# In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

March 17, 2003

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**War at Home** By David Moberg  
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**Editorial correspondence and letters** should be  
sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.  
Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180.  
E-mail: [itt@inthesetimes.com](mailto:itt@inthesetimes.com).

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## Editorial

# War With No Winners

In his address to the United Nations, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Iraq poses "a threat to international peace and security." But how solid is the evidence?

Powell told the world, "Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network, headed by Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda lieutenants." This information, Powell said, came from "detainees." But American officials have admitted those very detainees are subjected to torture, raising questions about the reliability of that information. An administration source explained to the *Washington Post*: "We don't kick the shit out of them, we send them to other countries so they can kick the shit out of them."

Meanwhile, someone at Britain's Defense Intelligence Staff leaked a document to the BBC indicating that its agents doubt there is any link between al-Qaeda and Iraq. And the *New York Times* reported that U.S. intelligence officials "said they were baffled by the Bush administration's insistence on a solid link between Iraq and Osama Bin Laden's network." The *Times* quoted an unnamed intelligence official: "We've been looking at this hard for more than a year and you know what, we just don't think it's there ... the intelligence is obviously being politicized."

To further bolster his case that Iraq posed a threat, Powell highlighted an intelligence report presented in January by Prime Minister Tony Blair. "I would call my colleagues' attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed ... which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities."

But this report, much ballyhooed when it was released, was not new intelligence, but information lifted from articles previously published in the *Middle East Review of International Affairs* and *Jane's Intelligence Review*, and then edited to sound more ominous. A British intelligence officer told *The Independent*: "You cannot just cherry-pick evidence that suits your case and ignore the rest. It is a cardinal rule of intelligence. Yet that is what the PM is doing."

Ditto for the U.S. president. An American intelligence official told *The Independent*, "We've gone from a zero position, where presidents refused to cite detailed intel as a source, to the point now where partisan material is being officially attributed to these agencies."

Last summer, Sen. Bob Graham (D-Florida), then chairman of the Senate

Intelligence Committee, asked the CIA to assess the danger that Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction. Initially the CIA released only those portions of its report that supported going to war. Pressed by Sen. Graham, the CIA reluctantly acknowledged that the likelihood Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction, if it had them, was "low" in the "foreseeable future."

CIA Director George Tenet elaborated in an October 7 letter to Congress: "Baghdad now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting terrorist attacks with conventional [chemical and biological weapons] against the United States. Should Saddam conclude that a U.S.-led attack could no longer be deterred, he probably would become much less constrained in adopting terrorist actions."

Have we now reached that point? Investigative reporter Robert Parry at Consortiumnews.com reports, "Since the CIA's assessment, the Bush administration received specific warnings from abroad that easily transportable stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons indeed have been moved outside Iraq so they can be deployed against Western targets as retaliatory weapons."

If that is so, the war with Iraq now runs the danger of spiraling into a nuclear confrontation.

## The war with Iraq now runs the danger of spiraling into a nuclear confrontation.

On September 14, 2002, Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive: "The United States will continue to make it clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force—including potential use of nuclear weapons—to the use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our forces abroad and friends and allies."

Are the administration's warnings to Saddam in danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy? Or are they exaggerated claims aimed at enlisting the U.S. public—instructed in how to duct-tape their hopes against a chemical or biological attack—war with Iraq? Either way, the Bush administration is playing a deadly game. Based on past performance of the players involved, it doesn't appear to be a game with any winners.

—Joel Bleifuss

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"Poetry and the American Voice" in action.



## Blaming the Jews

To quote Rashid Khalidi, "Rarely have false conclusions flowed so smoothly from sound premises" ("Attack Iraq?" February 17). I am referring to Khalidi's obvious anti-Israel bend when he says, "This war will be fought for ... Israel hegemony." Don't blame Israel for what America is doing. I doubt very much that Israel is happy about it. They will be the first to be bombed when Iraq retaliates.

I do not condone any of the awful things Ariel Sharon has been doing in the name of protecting his country, but don't blame Israel for the actions of George W. Bush. Blaming the Jews is not a new idea, but it makes me unhappy to see it in *In These Times*. The anti-Semitism which crops up from time to time in your paper is, at best, extremely troubling.

**Joy Rose**  
Media, Pennsylvania

## Either/Or

Regarding Eleanor J. Bader's observation that "everyone knows that pregnant women have three options—adoption, abortion or childbirth" ("Beyond Choice," February 17): Excuse me, but the choices are only two—abortion or childbirth. Adoption comes afterward.

**Jody Aliesan**  
Seattle

## Rap's Message Mixed

As Salim Muwakkil points out ("Hip Hop Hysteria," January 20), there are those within the hip hop movement who work toward putting out a positive message, though the main message many people outside the movement perceive is one of greed and selfishness.

I work in the middle of Manhattan and see "rap culture" up close and personal five days a week. For the most part, it is not a pretty sight: lots of heavy-duty macho posturing and plenty of foul and offensive language. All too often it is the rappers themselves who do the most damage by showing how successful they can be protesting "the system," only to buy into it once they have made some money.

Those of us on the left should know by now this is only another form of oppression: It helps keep those most in need of learning useful life skills from seeking out those skills. After all, why go to school and learn when you can become a big-time rap star? Manhattan is filled to the brim with minimum-wage-earning, low-skilled, would-be-but-never-will-be rap stars.

**Ralph Pantuso**  
Mahwah, New Jersey

## Crimes of Segregation

Damien Jackson says that *Keyes v. Denver* "hampered plaintiffs in de facto segregated systems" by requiring proof of "intentionally segregative school board actions in a meaningful portion of a school system" ("Here Comes the Neighborhood," January 20).

*Keyes* was, in fact, a victory for desegregation. The legal question in *Keyes* was not whether plaintiffs were required to show that a school district intentionally segregated. The legal question was whether the racial segregation in Park Hill was related to the entire school district. Writing for the majority, Justice Brennan ruled in the affirmative. The finding of intentional segregation in Park Hill, he said, established a "prima facie case of intentional segregation in the core city schools." Not surprisingly, Justice Rehnquist dissented.

**Trevor Rosson**  
Austin, Texas

**Damien Jackson responds:** Rosson is generally correct but leaves out the key part, which is the standard of proof in such cases. The Supreme Court could have used *Keyes* to remedy northern de facto school segregation, but it didn't. The Court has consistently held that proof of discriminatory impact is not enough to show a violation of equal protection. Plaintiffs must have proof of a discriminatory purpose, which posed a huge obstacle to northern systems segregated by housing patterns.

In a recent paper, Professor Erwin Chemerinsky of the University of Southern California explains: "The reality is that *Keyes* created an insurmountable obstacle to judicial remedies for desegregation in northern cities. The government unquestionably was responsible for segregation in northern schools; but often proof of this was not possible."

## Don't Fear Fingerprinting

Rudolph DiGiacinto points out that although Maryland has a ballistics fingerprinting law, it "completely failed to catch the snipers" ("Letters," January 6). A successful ballistics fingerprinting system has to include reliable registration of newly purchased firearms. In the case of the snipers, this failed. The gun shop where the murder weapon was purchased did not register the purchase of the sniper's rifle. In fact, the gun shop failed to register hundreds of firearms sold over the last couple of years.

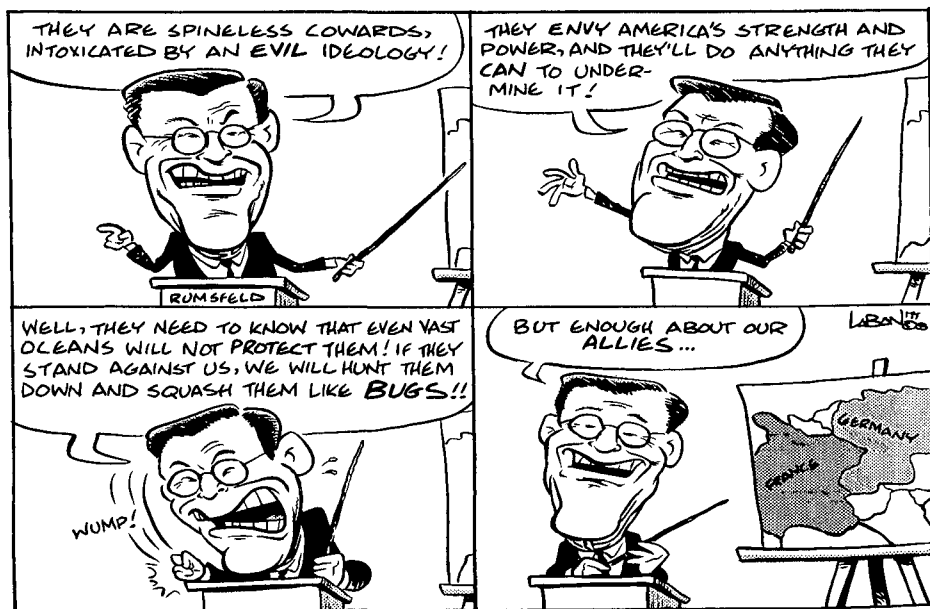
Those of us who hunt and shoot at targets have nothing to fear from a nationwide ballistics fingerprinting system. Once a slug is dug from a murder victim, the shooter has forfeited the right to "gun privacy."

**John J. Huntington**  
Seattle

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*IN THESE TIMES*  
2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
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## Terry LaBan





# Secrets and Lies

Leaked documents  
describe Patriot Act II

By Naureen Shah

Like the big-budget movie sequel kept under wraps for months and rumored to be much worse than the original, what has been called Patriot Act II is making headlines months before its release. In February, the Center for Public Integrity, a watchdog group, announced it had received a leaked copy of draft legislation that details significant expansions to the already notorious 2001 USA Patriot Act.

The legislation, allegedly authored by the Department of Justice, has drawn criticism from across the spectrum, with the American Civil Liberties Union and American Conservative Union (ACU) teaming up to denounce key provisions, and some senators issuing frustrated statements in response to the secrecy under which the bill was drafted.

What the White House terms a "review of measures to protect the country," the ACLU calls a fundamental alteration of constitutional protections. The legislation would authorize secret arrests for the first time in U.S. history as well as criminalize association with organizations deemed terrorist. It would legalize greater secrecy regarding INS detainees and expand the application of the death penalty under a broadened definition of terrorism. If an anti-war protester breaks the law during a demonstration and someone dies as a result, the ACLU says, the protester could face execution.

Among other provisions, the bill would employ the top-secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court—traditionally used only in espionage and international terrorism cases—to allow government surveillance and wiretapping of U.S. citizens. It would exempt federal agents tracking citizens without a court order from criminal prosecution if they were following orders from high executive branch officials. And it would legalize the deportation of lawful permanent residents without evidence of crime or criminal intent if the attorney general labels them a threat to national security.

The proposed act would also permit the cataloging of Americans' genetic information without their knowledge or consent, allow sensitive personal information about citizens without any connection to anti-terrorism efforts to be shared with local law enforcement, and grant blanket immunity to businesses that report false terrorism tips to the government, even if they do so with reckless disregard for the truth.

The leak comes at a time of growing congressional impatience with the executive branch over lack of consultation and over-



A new police surveillance center in Washington monitors the city for "terrorists."

sight. "Congress is not inclined to give the executive branch more powers after it has been rebuffed by the Department of Justice in its efforts to find out how the Patriot Act has been implemented," says Nancy Chang of the Center For Constitutional Rights.

The suppression of information about the legislation, called "The Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003," adds insult to injury. Despite numerous requests for information, senior members of the Senate Judiciary Committee were told no such legislation was in the works just days before the Center for Public Integrity released the draft. In a February 10 letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft, Michigan Democrat John Conyers complained that "the handling of this matter [has] only lent credence to suggestions that ... the Justice Department is waiting to spring this bill on

the Congress when the nation once again has endured a terrorist attack or is in the midst of war."

A Department of Justice spokeswoman maintains that national security proposals are still in internal deliberations and have not been presented to the White House. However, a memo obtained by the TV show *NOW with Bill Moyers* implies the draft has already been sent to Vice President Dick Cheney and Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert. In response to a question about the legislation in early February, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said such measures "are underway in draft form at the Department of Justice. I think you would expect the government to constantly review all measures to protect the country."

As controversy swirls over the legislation's concealment, legal and political analysts are gearing up for a fight that was missing during the passage of the first Patriot Act, which surfed through a shell-shocked Senate only weeks after the September 11 attacks. "This gives [critics] days, weeks, months—it takes away the element of surprise," says Chuck Lewis, the Center's executive director.

The leak also gives critics from traditionally opposing political camps a chance to shape a powerful coalition. "This is not really ideological," says ACU chairman Dave Keene, whose group is developing an analysis of the legislation with the ACLU. "This is about skepticism. People on the Hill have had a chance to reflect on what's needed. [With this] our security would be enhanced, but our freedom would not."

In further consolidating power in the executive branch, the second Patriot Act undermines civil liberties protections in a way the first Patriot Act never did. Under the new legislation, even "an individual who works to further the lawful ends of a group is assumed to support furthering its unlawful ends," Chang says. "U.S. citizens who exercise First Amendment rights could conceivably lose their citizenship."

The draft legislation seems to pit all but the most ardent Bush supporters against any new Department of Justice-sponsored security measures. "The technological capacities the government is acquiring and the removal of basic legal checks move us in a direction that was never possible 20 years ago," says Tim Edgar, legislative counsel for the ACLU. "Does this bring us a lot closer to 1984? Absolutely." ■

# Anti-War Update

A roundup of opposition across the country

By Stacia Falat

## Protest mania

Protests spread nationwide in January, culminating in a day of marches and rallies on January 18 that drew hundreds of thousands of people to San Francisco and Washington. Pittsburgh's rally on Super Bowl Sunday, 5,000 strong, ended with a dramatic "die-in" in which marchers stretched out in the street to represent the war dead. At press time, protests on February 15 and 16 in 300 cities worldwide were expected to draw hundreds of thousands.

## The elderly take action

On January 31, more than 80 senior citizens from Mill Valley's Redwoods

Retirement Center in California took to the streets. Waving posters and singing protest songs, the seniors marched with canes, wheelchairs and walkers in front of their nursing home. "I don't support any of this," said resident Mutsu Muneno, 95. "It winds up killing the young."

## Nobel laureates oppose war

Forty-one American Nobel laureates in science and economics issued an anti-war statement on January 27. "Even with a victory, we believe that the ... consequences of an American preventive attack on Iraq would undermine, not protect, U.S. security and standing in the world," reads their declaration. Among the signers are Hans A. Bethe, an architect of the atom bomb, and other former national security and Pentagon officials.

## Cities for peace

Chicago is the largest of 90 cities and counties nationwide to pass a resolution expressing opposition to a pre-emptive attack on Iraq. At press time, campaigns in another 98 towns and cities were underway.

Members from 30 cities that have passed resolutions went to Washington February 13 to meet with, or leave their resolutions for delivery to, President Bush. (For more information, go to [www.citiesforpeace.org](http://www.citiesforpeace.org).)

## Historians form alliance

On January 3, 1,000 historians from 250 colleges and 47 states formed a national network, "Historians Against the War" (on the Web at [www.historiansagainstawar.org](http://www.historiansagainstawar.org)). "We historians call for a halt to the march toward war against Iraq," the group declared. "We are deeply concerned about the needless destruction of human life."

## Celebrities sign on

Artists United to Win Without War, a group of Hollywood actors, producers and directors, sent an anti-war letter to President Bush in December. The letter's 105 signers included Susan Sarandon, Jackson Browne and Matt Damon. (For a complete list, see [www.moveon.org/artistswinwithoutwar](http://www.moveon.org/artistswinwithoutwar).)

## Dissent in Congress

Much of Congress openly supports the war or has remained silent. But Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) has introduced a resolution in Congress that calls on Bush to fully support the work of U.N. inspectors and to require another congressional vote before he declares war. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) presented similar legislation in the House, co-sponsored by Reps. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), Barbara Lee (D-California), Danny Davis (D-Illinois) and Diane Watson (D-California).

In early February, Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) and Ron Paul (R-Texas) introduced a bill that would repeal the 2002 resolution authorizing use of military force against Iraq. The measure has 31 co-sponsors.

## The organizing continues

More than 600,000 people and counting have joined the anti-war movement online at MoveOn.org, which has run television ads in major markets and met with members of Congress in an effort to drum up opposition to war. The group joins hundreds of other progressive organizations, including more than 100 labor unions and 32 college student governments, in condemning possible military action in Iraq. ■

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

I AM OUTRAGED BY THE DETERMINATION OF AN UNELECTED PRESIDENT TO DRAG US INTO AN UNNECESSARY WAR! AND I AM OUTRAGED BY HIS ASSERTION THAT WE WILL NOT "PASS OUR PROBLEMS ALONG" TO FUTURE GENERATIONS--WHEN HE'S THE ONE PROPOSING A TRILLION DOLLAR DEFICIT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS!



I AM OUTRAGED THAT ENRON AND THE OTHER CORPORATE SCANDALS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVELY SWEEPED UNDER THE CARPET! AND THAT DICK CHENEY STILL HASN'T MADE HIS ENERGY TASK FORCE RECORDS PUBLIC! AND THAT THE S.E.C. HAS ACTUALLY JUST WEAKENED ACCOUNTING INDUSTRY OVERSIGHT!



AND I AM OUTRAGED BY THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION--NOT TO MENTION THEIR STEALTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST ABORTION RIGHTS--AND THE BILLIONS THEY'RE POURING INTO AN ALL-BUT-USELESS MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM--



--AND THEIR COMPLETE CONTEMPT FOR BASIC CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS--AND THEIR EFFORTS TO PORTRAY ANY DISSENT AS UNPATRIOTIC--AND--AND--



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## Piping Mad

### Citizens stand up to water privatization

By Brian Cook

The tidal rush to privatize water service in the United States appeared to subside on January 24, when Atlanta announced it was canceling its contract with a private company, United Water, after enduring four years of unclean water, shoddy service and unmet contract obligations. In October, a massive outcry from citizens put the brakes on New Orleans' plans to privatize its own water system.

In the wake of such events, it would seem prudent for cities to rigorously analyze the costs and benefits of privatization before signing over control of their municipal water supply to so-called public-private partnerships. So why are city officials in Stockton, California, rushing into a 20-year, \$600 million arrangement with OMI-Thames Water?

"The city is on an ideological bandwagon," says Juliette Beck, senior organizer at Public Citizen's Water for All campaign. "They're railroading democracy for a project that's not even going to save them any money."

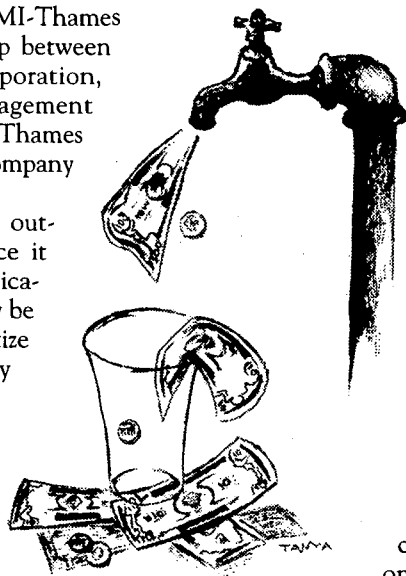
After Stockton Mayor Gary Podesto announced his plans to privatize the city's water and wastewater infrastructure in 1999, the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton, a group opposed to privatization, collected the 18,000 signatures needed for a public referendum on any contract worth more than \$5 million proposing to privatize public utilities. On October 15, the coalition handed their petition to the Stockton City Council, asking that the vote take place in January. The council decided to delay the vote until March 4—then announced they would enter into immediate negotiations with OMI-Thames Water (a partnership between an American corporation, Operations Management International, and Thames Water, a British company looking to expand).

Residents were outraged, especially since it was not the first indication city officials may be determined to privatize at any cost. In January 2002, eyebrows were raised when Alternative Resources Inc. (ARI) was hired as a third-party consultant to make the final

recommendation on whether to privatize. ARI is a member of the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships (NCPPP), a group whose membership includes entities like OMI-Thames. In turn, the NCPPP is a member of the H2O Coalition, a manufacturer and industry consortium that actively lobbies against directing federal aid toward long-neglected U.S. water and wastewater infrastructures.

In an effort to show the City Council was not wholly dismissive of public opinion, Podesto announced in December that the city would hold eight "public forums" from January 15 to January 29. "We get frustrated," Podesto said at the time, "because we're answering over and over and over again the same questions. I've just got to be more patient. We'll answer them and we'll answer them and we'll answer them."

But rather than providing the promised answers, the forums only provoked more questions. Angry citizens pointed out that when the Council makes its final decision on February 19, there will be



## Too Much Information

Opposition groups on the left and right have stepped in to block Adm. John Poindexter's pet project, the Total Information Awareness program. Part of the Department of Defense, the TIA seeks to identify terrorists by automating surveillance of common consumer information like credit card purchases, travel reservations and e-mails. Groups like the ACLU, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the conservative Free Congress Foundation worry the year-old initiative, introduced in the wake of the September 11 attacks, would allow unprecedented levels of government intrusion in the lives of law-abiding citizens.

But in February, the TIA was essentially foiled by an amendment to a Senate omnibus spending bill. The amendment, introduced by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), makes funding for Poindexter's data surveillance research program contingent on approval by government departments and Congress. In Senate and House conference over the bill, the amendment sailed through amid controversy over the allocation of billions of dollars for other programs. Unless conferees are unable to resolve major disputes over the bill—or the president vetoes it—the

TIA will be unable to conduct research to be used against U.S. citizens without specific authorization from Congress.

Poindexter, notorious for his role in the Iran-Contra affair, has witnessed sharp rebukes to his initiative not only from the usual suspects—civil liberties activists and senators like Wyden and Wisconsin's Russ Feingold—but also by civil libertarians on the right. And although it is a victory for civil rights groups, the amendment's effect is limited by its nature: Tacked on to an appropriations bill, the amendment only affects 2003 funding and still allows the TIA to continue some research. It could also still assist lawful military operations abroad and foreign intelligence operations directed against non-citizens. "This is only a first step," says the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Lee Tien. "It's a good sign that nobody in Congress seems to be interested [in supporting data-mining research], but this doesn't really put TIA down the way other legislation would."

Legislation introduced in February by Feingold would place a moratorium on all data-mining programs run by the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. At press time, the bill was pending in the Senate.

## IN SHORT

BY NAUREEN SHAH



a host of unresolved issues, including the contracts of more than 100 unionized workers that remain in dispute despite months of negotiations; an environmental impact review, required by California law, but which the city's lawyers argue is unnecessary; and the contract itself, which OMI-Thames claims will save the city \$175 million over the next 20 years.

Gary Wolff, principal economist at the Pacific Institute, a West Coast think tank, joins Stockton residents in doubting that estimate. Wolff's own analysis found that the city would actually save \$1.7 million per year by not privatizing. In using more realistic projected inflation rates, he says, "All these projected annual cost savings disappeared."

But even worse than overpaying for basic services could be the consequences of the services themselves. Thames Water recently ran into trouble in Eng-

land, where it provides water for 13 million residents. On December 19, England's Environment Agency admonished the company for "unacceptably high levels of [pipe] leakage," which it said left London customers at "greater risk of water shortages."

In fact, Thames has been England's most heavily penalized polluter in two of the past four years and has been accused of preferring to pay fines over maintaining its facilities. In 2000, the chief executive of the Environment Agency complained, "The scale of penalties levied by the courts makes pollution—and prosecution—an acceptable risk and an acceptable business expense for too many." That same year, Thames was fined roughly \$400,000 after "a series of errors" caused several homes to be flooded with raw sewage and industrial waste.

But if pollution is an integral part of Thames' business strategy, so is expan-

sion. Though Thames' parent company, the German conglomerate RWE, is \$27 billion in debt, it recently doled out \$7.6 billion to acquire American Water Works, one of the largest water companies in the United States. The managing director of Thames Water North America justified the purchase by pointing out that, since only 15 percent of water in the United States is provided by private companies, "this transaction is predicated on Thames Water taking a share of the growing water privatization services in the United States."

Back in Stockton, Sylvia Kothe of the Concerned Citizens Coalition expresses the main reason why her community, and others like it, are adamantly opposed to such expansion. "Water service shouldn't be left to a private company. In the end, they're only answerable to their shareholders. And this is our water." ■

## Whatsoever You Do [4.7]

It's sort of like stocks in the village green, but with an overlay of therapeutic sanctimony. As hundreds of neighbors turned out to watch, two teens were recently marched through the streets of Fairport Harbor, Ohio, towing a donkey bearing a sign that read, "Sorry for the jackass offense."

According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Jessica Lange and Brian Patrick, both 19, agreed to participate in the spectacle to reduce their jail time for a Christmas Eve prank. The pair stabbed the Baby Jesus in the nativity display at St. Anthony's Catholic Church and then daubed it with "666," gestures that didn't go over so well in Fairport.

Judge Michael Cicconetti dreamed up the parade through town as "a kind of conscience flogging" intended to "bring them some public humiliation." After their half-hour-long procession, Lange and Patrick were met at the village hall, where they issued a perfunctory apology and Police

Chief Mark Kish lectured them about "a second chance." A crowd of burgers cheered, and the kids were hauled off to a 45-day stretch, which will include drug and alcohol re-education. "They obviously have some issues," Kish commented, as a squad car took them away. "I hope that with treatment they can go in a new direction."

## Friends Indeed [4.5]

Last year we reported the plight of a couple of Quad Cities simpletons who tattooed the logo of a local rock radio station on their foreheads after station executives allegedly promised them \$30,000 a year each for the next five years to do so. When the station refused to pay, the men filed suit. They also found it difficult to find jobs.

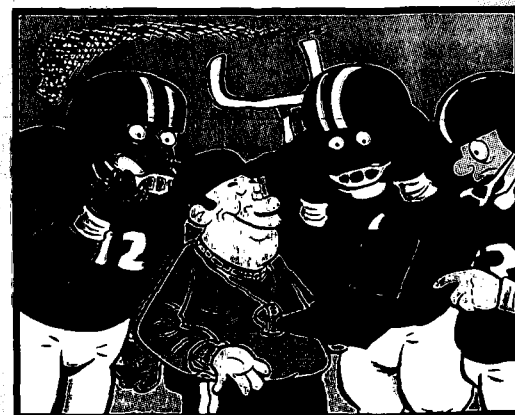
One of them, Richard C. Goddard Jr., 21, of Davenport, Iowa, moved into the trailer of John and Mary Rushman, a couple in their forties. Goddard was given to

complaining about his fate, aparently, and at least once announced an intention to do himself in. The Rushmans got sick of their younger trailer mate, according to *Quad Cities Online*, and in February they decided to teach him a lesson. They tied a noose around his neck, threw the rope over a ceiling beam, and apparently tried to string him up. Giving up on that trick, they then pummeled Goddard's face with a ball peen hammer.

A neighbor alerted police after finding Goddard lying outside the trailer. The Rushmans have been charged with three counts of aggravated battery. Meanwhile, Goddard's lawsuit against KORB, "the Quad City Rocker," goes to trial later this month.

## A Little Learning [4.5]

Used to be, Brad Miller held the post of quality control coach for the Green Bay Packers. He has been promoted to assistant defensive line coach, thanks in part to his aptitude with PowerPoint, which none of the other Packer brain-trusters could master. "We all help in whatever way we can," Miller told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* with becoming humility. "It's like that Karl Marx thing: 'To each according to his ability, to each according to his need.'"





# Good Government, Green and Simple

A few days before President Bush gave his State of Union speech on January 28, Green Party officials asked Matt Gonzalez if he wanted to travel to Washington to give the Greens' rebuttal.

Gonzalez, the newly elected president of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, politely declined. "I think it's not what my [board] colleagues want me to do, that's not what the public here wants me to do. They want to see me grounded in local issues and focused on that," said Gonzalez, speaking the morning before the President's speech from his spacious office in San Francisco's City Hall.

In a city of nearly 800,000, Gonzalez's position as board president makes him, at least for the next two years, the second highest-ranking official in San Francisco's government, next to the mayor. (Because San Francisco is organized as both a city and county, there is no city council: The Board of Supervisors governs both.)

The position also makes him one of the country's most prominent Greens. While Gonzalez downplays his broader role for the party, other members hail his ascension as particularly significant. "Matt's election energized the whole party," says Susan King, a member of the San Francisco Green Party's County Council.

Fundamentally, Gonzalez's election means there is a Green in a high-profile city who is in charge of making committee assignments, pushing legislation and building coalitions to pass laws, and he firmly believes that's where his focus should be.

Referring to the knock he's heard from most critics—that Greens can't govern—he says: "One of the things I've been trying to do is re-appropriate the idea of fundamental city services back from the more conservative members of the board, and to try to get away from this notion that the fundamental idea of government serving people is not a progressive value. In fact, serving people is a progressive value. That is what it's all about, ultimately."

Gonzalez, 37, understands that there is broader significance to his election for the Greens, and for Latinos. "We were very surprised to learn I was the first Latino board president," he says, digging through a box of

mail. "There have been African-American women who have been board presidents. In fact, five of the last 10 Board of Supervisor presidents have been women. So there had been diversity in other ways. But in a state and a city that has such a large Latino population, we were surprised."

From the stack of letters, he pulls correspondence informing him that there was some precedent to his election: A member of the Progressive wing of the Republican Party was elected as San Francisco's board president in the '30s. This pleases Gonzalez, primarily because the board member was affiliated with former California Governor and Progressive Party founder Hiram Johnson. Gonzalez sees Johnson an example of a leader who promoted the "good government" movement, a service-oriented bent that he admires and continues to follow.

Gonzalez himself worked for nearly a decade as a public defender before winning a four-year term on San Francisco's board, and it's that service background Gonzalez hopes to capitalize on as he promotes his top agenda item: putting a citywide minimum wage measure on the ballot in November. He understands it's a high hurdle to clear, but he has a few things in his favor, including the existence of an already established living wage law. Passed by the board in 2000, the "minimum compensation" law requires city service contractors, including nonprofit agencies and leaseholders at San Francisco International Airport, to pay workers at least \$10.25 an hour.

To establish a minimum wage of somewhere between \$8.25 and \$8.75 per hour for workers in the city, Gonzalez is counting on alliances between progressives and the city's business organizations—two groups that have not always joined forces in the past. Yet

he may be able to build such a coalition, considering that similarly strange allies thrust Gonzalez into his leadership position.

In a town that has long been run by Democrats like Mayor Willie Brown, and on an 11-member board with nine Democrats, his chance to win the presidency against two

Democrats seemed slim, at best. But for some of the more independent-minded members of the board, it was precisely Gonzalez's distance from the Democratic machine that made him an attractive board president. He won January's election by a 6 to 5 margin.

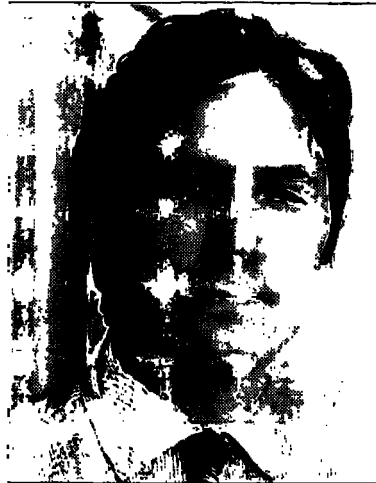
Gonzalez, a Texas native and Stanford law grad, represents the city's District 5, a large portion of which covers the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. Though hardly the counterculture mecca of '60s legend, Haight-Ashbury remains

a wildly diverse neighborhood, home to long-time merchants, older property owners, twenty-something kids from the suburbs and a considerable contingent of homeless teens. Gonzalez has these residents in mind when discussing the minimum wage law and other aspects of his agenda, including improving the city's homeless assistance programs.

With such plans, gaining national recognition is not high on Gonzalez's list. That's perfectly fine with party organizers such as Ross Mirkarimi, a founder of California's Green Party. "Though these kinds of local offices are considered non-partisan, this is the bread and butter of the Green Party's progress," Mirkarimi says. "Sustaining and occupying as many seats as possible, and parlaying those into the partisan arena."

In addition, he says, gaining those offices provides a challenge for the Greens. "The burden of proof is on us to show we can govern too."

Gonzalez agrees. "I think the Greens are best served if, after my tenure, people look back and say, 'He worked on fundamental issues, and he kept his focus.'" ■



**Matt Gonzalez, president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.**

# Sweeps Week War

By Ana Marie Cox

**T**he latest pronouncement by our Cowboy-in-Chief about the possibility of war dipped into the president's vocabulary of the vernacular: "The game is over."

Could the administration be looking to popular culture for more than just catch phrases? A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out a new development in television that is disappointing, inevitable and curiously reminiscent of Bush's governing strategy.

The *Journal* reported that "sweeps week," long the haven of stunt programming designed to breathe momentary life into established series (with such attention-getting stunts as celebrity guest stars and the opening of various tombs and vaults), has become a sad, self-contained mini-season all its own—designed to expire ingloriously after the advertising rates are secured. Upcoming during this February's sweeps week: ABC's *Are You Hot?*—a contest that adopts the ruthless ego-bashing celebrity panel of judges of FOX's *American Idol*, but eliminates any need for talent.

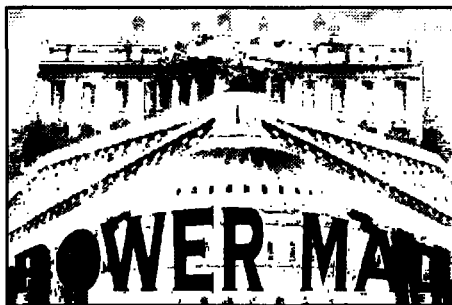
Also coming in February, if you believe the president's boast of "weeks, not months," is a sensationalist sequel to the Gulf War. I predict high ratings.

An organized PR offensive is already underway. The administration has placed key officials not just on the usual round of Sunday chat shows, but in the warm embrace of local newscasters. Donald Rumsfeld chatted with the anchors of affiliates in Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle and Minneapolis. Paul Wolfowitz oozed charm with the folks of New York and San Francisco. In Cleveland, WJW-TV came after Wolfowitz with the following: "Mr. Secretary, you're the expert on Iraq. You're the guy the president calls for information here. What is the strongest case [Colin Powell made] in front of the United Nations?"

Not exactly a hard-hitting question. But the depressing spectacle of the sweeps week war hides more than a unilateralist will to empire. The war and its accompanying show, good idea or bad, distract us from the rest of Bush's dismal programming schedule. Worst of all is the Bush budget,

a \$2.23 trillion-dollar deficit-expanding bonanza of tax cuts, reduced social spending and defense-contractor-pleasing.

The bad news is about what you'd expect. There's the bald-faced retreat on several programs the president proudly trotted out as recently as last month. At a visit to the National Institutes of Health, Bush lauded a "bioshield" initiative to guard against bioterrorist attacks, but NIH will have a difficult time enacting



any new programs under a budget that caps its spending at current levels.

Recently, Housing Secretary Mel Martinez told homebuilders that the administration would put \$200 million toward boosting homeownership by low-income families, but the new budget cuts more than twice that amount—\$574 million—out of a program for refurbishing existing public-housing units.

And the \$15 billion in African AIDS relief Bush proposed in the State of the Union address matches the cuts made from a separate development-aid initiative, a move that prompted one activist group to complain of "robbing Peter to pay Peter."

But this zero-sum math pales next to the much larger issue no one in Washington is seriously addressing: How the proposed spending and massive tax cuts would move the country toward bankruptcy. By 2050, according to the administration's own numbers, the United States will incur a debt that's 250 percent of GDP. So much for another one of the president's State of the Union promises: "We will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, to other presidents, and other generations."

Economists and oracles, including Alan Greenspan, are mystified by the president's

outrageous contention that a deficit of a few trillion dollars is exactly what the economy needs. Addressing the Senate Banking Committee, Greenspan dispensed with his usual cryptic pronouncements and plainly stated, "We have to make sure the fiscal vehicle does not run off the road." Economist J. Bradford Delong criticizes the plan in clearer terms: "I really cannot understand why anyone would do this."

To those who simply point to the pattern of the Reagan years, where huge deficits justified gutting social programs, one can only reply that at least Reagan was honest about his intent. Bush continues to make empty promises about mentoring programs, childcare and housing.

The White House's self-serving neglect of the lessons of the recent past parallels the precarious state of the president's popularity right now, war or no war. While outright approval ratings are holding steady at around 60 percent, nearly half of those polled disapprove of how he's handling the economy.

The fiscal irresponsibility exhibited by the administration has even Republicans

**Iraq is meant to distract us from the rest of Bush's dismal programming schedule.**

scratching their heads. The *Washington Post* reports that the White House's congressional allies are balking at some of the budget's centerpieces, including the elimination of taxes on stock dividends.

At a hearing with White House Budget Director Mitch Daniels, Minnesota Republican Rep. Gil Gutknecht declared, "I must say, this is a tough pill to swallow." Gutknecht went on: "It's very difficult for us to justify borrowing an extra million—oh, I'm sorry, an extra trillion, or two trillion, whatever the number is, from our grandchildren—in order to say yes to all these national priorities."

The presidency of George W. Bush has been built upon an unspoken desire not to repeat the mistakes of his father. But seeing the debacle over the budget unfold, one can only hope that in 2004 we'll be watching a re-run from 1992. ■



# The Proof Is in the Padding

By Russ Baker

**T**he country has been put on high alert, and I too have heightened my alertness—for balderdash masquerading as bald facts. I'd urge everyone to adopt the same attitude. We can start by going back for a more careful look at Secretary of State Colin Powell's Security Council address on February 5, which pundits and politicians—and, according to a new poll, a majority of the American public—are calling a powerful argument for an assault on Iraq.

Among other things, Powell praised a British intelligence report on Iraq that was later revealed to be based on plagiarized material from magazine articles and someone's old doctoral thesis. Even more telling was the section of Powell's presentation that came closest to revealing the long-sought "smoking gun." A summary of newspaper reports, published in the influential online magazine *Slate*, put it this way:

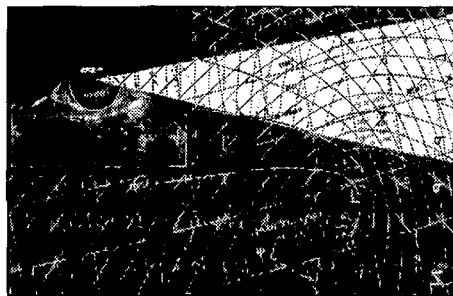
[Powell] released audio tapes of Iraqis playing hide-'n-seek: In one conversation recorded a few weeks ago, an officer tells a subordinate, "Remove 'nerve agents' wherever it comes up in the wireless instructions." Double-checking, the underling repeats the instructions. His boss's response: "Stop talking about it. They are listening to us. Don't give any evidence that we have these horrible agents."

Note the quotation marks. Like most Americans who read the brief summaries in the following day's papers, I was amazed that an Iraqi officer had warned someone to "stop talking about it ... they are listening," since that in itself would be an admission of guilt to those very listeners. And, even more so, that he would say, "Don't give any evidence that we have these horrible agents." He sounds disgusted—and practically begging for an invasion to save the world and his own skin.

I was about ready to suit up for battle myself, when I paused to double-check the transcripts of Powell's talk for the exact language of the audio tapes. And that's when double-check led to double-take. Because no Iraqi officer talked about "horrible agents." Those were Colin

Powell's words. The secretary of state had simply taken the liberty to paraphrase what he believed the officers were implying in their conversation. He was putting words in their mouths. But the *Slate* summary, mailed to influential people all over the country, mixed up what the Iraqis had actually been heard saying with Powell's tendentious paraphrase.

See—or listen—for yourself. A conversation in Arabic was played for the Security



Council. The transcript, as translated by the State Department, goes as follows:

COLONEL: Captain Ibrahim?  
CAPTAIN: I am with you, sir.  
COLONEL: Remove.  
CAPTAIN: Remove.  
COLONEL: The expression.  
CAPTAIN: The expression.  
COLONEL: Nerve agents.  
CAPTAIN: Nerve agents.  
COLONEL: Wherever it comes up.  
CAPTAIN: Wherever it comes up.  
COLONEL: In the wireless instructions.  
CAPTAIN: In the instructions.  
COLONEL: Wireless.  
CAPTAIN: Wireless.

Then Powell begins talking:

Let's review a few selected items of this conversation. Two officers talking to each other on the radio want to make sure that nothing is misunderstood. ... Why does he repeat it that way? Why is he so forceful, making sure this is understood, and why did he focus on wireless instructions? Because the senior officer is concerned that somebody might be listening. Well, somebody was. Nerve agents. Stop talking about it. They are listening to us. Don't give any evidence that we have these horrible agents.

Naturally, the Iraqis denied Powell's assertions. The intercepted telephone conversations were "simply not true and not genuine," said an Iraqi general. "Any third-rate intelligence outfit could produce such a recording."

After years of duplicity, Iraqi officials don't have any credibility. The problem is, the arguments put forth by any party with a predetermined agenda must be viewed with skepticism. Powell's totally fictional line about "horrible agents" may reflect the gist of the Iraqi's actual words. Or there may be another explanation.

We're told that, in a translation of a conversation from a scratchy recording, some person whose identity we cannot know, referred to "nerve agents." Assuming the tape is clear enough, and the translation correct, all we have is someone telling someone to remove a reference to nerve agents. And what kind of reference? We have no idea. Anything is possible. It could be an old reference, in an old manual, to nerve agents Iraq used to have. It could be instructions on what to do if confronted with nerve agents launched by enemy troops. It could be anything at all.

It's not that Saddam isn't horrible, or that he doesn't have some dangerous weapons. He probably does. It's that the United States, despite all its high-tech intelligence-gathering, does not really know very much about Saddam's capabilities and intentions. Instead of admitting that, which would undermine its case for a pre-emptive strike on oil-rich Iraq, the Bush administration is willing to twist the truth and pretend to know what it doesn't know.

History provides a chilling precedent. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson strong-armed Congress into giving him a blank check for conducting the Vietnam War in the so-called Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This resolution was based on a supposedly unprovoked attack on U.S. ships by North Vietnamese naval forces—an attack which almost certainly did not take place as Johnson described, and may not have happened at all.

Nearly 40 years later, heightened alertness looks like a wise idea. ■

**Russ Baker** is doing his own "monitoring" of events from his current perch in the Balkans.



**By Joel Bleifuss**

## Iraqis dissent

Many exiled Iraqis are speaking out against the looming war with Iraq. Three Iraqi dissidents, members of Iraqis in Exile Against the War and Sanctions, write in the current issue of *Red Pepper*: "Iraqis are not being allowed the space to develop their own resistance or to rebuild their country and institutions with their own resources. They are confronted with a stark choice between Saddam's dictatorship and a U.S. war. Iraqis are aware of the interaction between domestic and external factors, and many would argue that the regime could be gradually stripped of power if there was a real desire in the outside world. This would mean supporting and empowering the people and placing the emphasis on human rights instead of the convenient and well-worn weapons issue. It is perfectly possible to address the weapons issue through the inspection system and permanent monitoring, while lifting economic sanctions at the same time. The introduction of human rights monitors would strengthen civil society and help keep tyranny in check. ... However much we loathe the regime, most of us are wary of the U.S. agenda which we see as having little to do with us. War would be cataclysmic, and would lead to civilians being crushed between Bush's hammer and Saddam's anvil."

## An oily situation

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told *60 Minutes* in December that oil is not part of the equation in a war with Iraq. "Nonsense," he said, "it has nothing

to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil." Ahmed Chalabi, the man whom the Bush administration plans to replace Saddam Hussein with, is not so categorical. Chalabi is head of the Iraqi National Congress, a group that was created and then financed by the CIA.

Chalabi, who has recently been meeting with oil industry officials, told the *Washington Post*, "American companies will have a big shot at Iraqi oil."

## Out damn sect

International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) has refused to allow Rabbi Michael Lerner, the editor of *Tikkun*, to address the February 16 anti-war rally in San Francisco. Lerner has spoken out against Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories, has signed the Not in Our Name petition against the war, and has endorsed ANSWER rallies in the past. So what's the problem? ANSWER has deemed Lerner a supporter of Israel and will not allow a "pro-Israel" speaker on to the podium of any rally it sponsors.

A host of anti-war activists have signed a letter being widely circulated on the



## Everybody join in

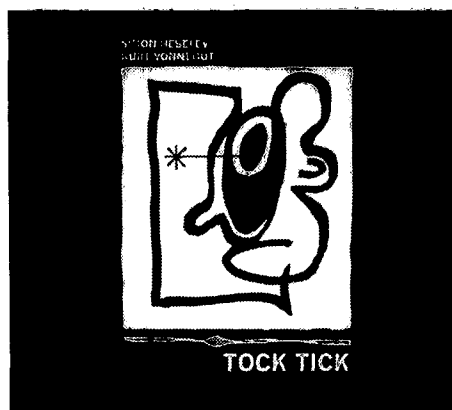
At John Ashcroft's Justice Department, where the private parts of the statues Spirit of Justice and the Majesty of Law have been draped in blue cloth, prayers before meetings are a matter of course. The liturgy has recently been embellished by patriotic music. Song sheets of "Let the Eagle Soar," the attorney general's ode to America, are now being passed out at department meetings/sing-a-longs. Asked by the *Guardian* of London why she was reluctant to join the heavenly chorus, a department lawyer replied, "Have you heard the song? It really sucks." How much does it suck? Hear for yourself at [cnn.com/video/us/2002/02/25/ashcroft.sings.wbvtv.med.html](http://cnn.com/video/us/2002/02/25/ashcroft.sings.wbvtv.med.html).

## Slaughterhouse Five, the song

For a more melodious tune, try "Tock Tick," a new single CD collaboration between Kurt Vonnegut and composer Simon Heselev. Heselev, a Melbourne native who works in Los Angeles writing music for TV, has set Vonnegut reading an excerpt from *Slaughterhouse Five* to music that he describes as "live electronica." In the excerpt, Billy Pilgrim, having "come unstuck in time," witnesses a World War II movie backwards. "I did this song a year ago, using a sample of Kurt I found on the Internet," says Heselev. "It's the most efficient anti-war statement there is. It couldn't be better." Check out "Tock Tick" on Vonnegut's website [www.vonnegut.com](http://www.vonnegut.com).

## Anti-drug

White House Drug Czar John Walters is refusing to reveal how much the federal government spent campaigning against Question 9, the Nevada marijuana initiative that was rejected by voters last November. Responding to a request for such information from Nevada Secretary of State Dean Heller, Walters claimed that he



Internet that, while encouraging people to participate in the demonstration, concludes, "At a time when the antiwar movement needs as broad a platform and as broad an appeal as possible, ANSWER has chosen instead to put the interests of sectarianism ahead of the interests of all those who oppose this foolish and unnecessary war. We believe this is a serious mistake, and that it exemplifies ANSWER's unfitness to lead mass mobilizations against war in Iraq."

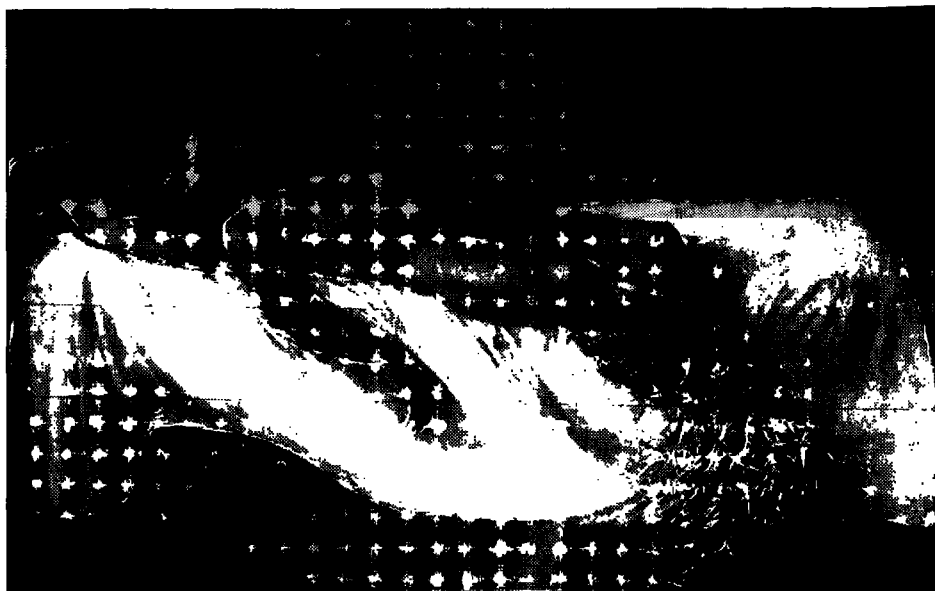


was "immune" from Nevada's campaign finance law "as a federal officer acting within the scope of duties, including speaking out about the dangers of illegal drugs."

Steve Fox of the Washington-based Marijuana Policy Project, which sponsored the initiative, was not impressed: "Claims that he was just doing his job by speaking out about the dangers of marijuana are absurd and insulting. He campaigned against Question 9 overtly and energetically, most likely spending tens of thousands of dollars of the taxpayers money in the process. All we ask is that he follows the law and play by the same rules we had to obey. We reported our campaign expenditures, and he should report his."

## Total Poindexter awareness

SF Weekly columnist and patriot Matt Smith thought it would be a good idea to subject former Iran-Contra felon and current Bush administration official John Poindexter with a dose of his own Total Information Awareness Project. Smith writes: "He says his personal-information-collecting idea is to look for patterns of potential terrorist activity. I say we all band together and look for patterns in John and Linda Poindexter's personal activity. Why for example, is their \$269,700 Rockville, Md., house covered with artificial siding, according to Maryland tax records? Shouldn't a Reagan conspirator be able to afford repainting every seven years? Is the



Donald Douglas Poindexter listed in Maryland sex-offender records any relation to the good admiral? What do Tom Maxwell, at 8 Barrington Fare, and Games Galvin, at 12 Barrington Fare, think of their spooky neighbor."

Smith wanted some questions answered, so he called John and Linda at (301) 424-6613. He got through once, but John wasn't home and Linda said she was on the other line.

## 'No Muslims—No Terrorism'

That was the message on a bumper sticker that was being hawked for \$3.95 at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference that featured Vice President Dick Cheney as its luncheon speaker.

## Interned for their own good

Rep. Howard Coble (R-North Carolina), speaking on a radio call-in show, responded to a suggestion that Arabs be interned in camps, by defending the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. "We were at war. They [Japanese-Americans] were an endangered species. For many of these Japanese-American, it wasn't safe for them to be on the street."

## Thank God it wasn't 7-11

Rep. Sue Myrick (R-North Carolina) of Charlotte is apparently worried about Arab merchants slipping something in her Slurpy. "Look at who runs all the convenience stores across the country," she said.

## Uprooted

This painting by Naman Hadi is part of *Iraqi Art Now: Looking Out, Looking In*, an exhibit of paintings, sculpture drawings and prints by Iraqi artists on exhibit at the DePaul University Art Gallery in Chicago through March 16. "The exhibition puts names, faces and lives of the people of Iraq in front of us. It reminds us to think not only of Iraq, but also of Iraqis," says gallery director Louise Lincoln. Of the 33 artists featured, most live in Western Europe, three reside in the United States, and five make their home in Baghdad.

## So who's the Anti-Christ?

Phil Sheldon's e-mail alert *Christian Response* is spreading the word: "The Bible prophesies a war that will kill 2 billion people. This war will begin in the area of the Euphrates River. Most of the Euphrates is in Iraq. The United States plans to attack Iraq in a matter of weeks. It appears that the time for this unprecedented war has arrived. Will one-third of mankind die in 2003?"

According to The Book of Revelation they will: "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men." Need more convincing? Send \$20 to *Endtime Magazine* for an hour-long apocalyptic video. ■



Politicalclothing.com has a vision for 2004.

# the WAR at HOME

BY DAVID MOBERG

The budget is the latest front in the Bush administration's global battle on behalf of corporations and the very rich

**U**nder any circumstances, the new Bush budget would seem ideologically driven, lopsidedly tilted to the rich, and deeply flawed as a purported stimulus to growth. But the administration's economic proposals are particularly peculiar and ominous in light of the administration's drive toward war in Iraq.

In times of war, governments typically call for national unity, shared sacrifice and gestures of egalitarianism (despite tendencies to repress dissent). The federal government imposed estate taxes to pay for the Civil War and Spanish-American War. During both World Wars, union membership grew substantially with government encouragement. During the Vietnam War, Lyndon Johnson pushed through massive new social programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid.

But Bush's economically ineffective program is virtually a declaration of domestic class war. "The only effect [of Bush's proposals] is to make the very rich richer," argues Nobel Prize-winning economist Franco Modigliani of MIT, "and the richer you are, the more you benefit." It's a "weapon of mass destruction aimed at middle-income households," says fellow Nobelist Daniel McFadden of the University of California-Berkeley. It will "exacerbate the problem of inequality," says Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University, another Nobelist.

"Rather than being a net stimulus, it may harm the economy in the short run and certainly will harm it in the long term."

Yet in a disturbing way, Bush's war at home complements, rather than contradicts, a war abroad. Both are part of an escalating ideological crusade to remake the world as a U.S.-dominated haven for corporations and the very rich, while undermining the role of government in providing anything but protection for those corporate interests. That effort includes bending the policies of other governments against the will of their citizens and transforming international institutions, from the U.N. Security Council and NATO to the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, into instruments of U.S. policy—or else threatening to dismantle them. Saddam Hussein is a conveniently demonic target, even if the administration has failed to make the case that he is an imminent threat to anyone other than his own citizens. But the ultimate point of war against Iraq—far more than the oil interests of the region or national security—is to assert American power.

This new American empire is not a classic imperial quest for control of other territory, even though it is driven by the self-interest of an American corporate and financial elite. Rather, it reflects the use of political and military power on behalf of ideology—a radical pro-corporate, anti-government, free-



market fundamentalism. In many ways, this ideology mirrors the archaic and dangerous fundamentalism of the erstwhile Taliban and al-Qaeda, a zealous quest for ideological empire that justifies violent means and tolerates no disagreement.

**T**he empire builders of the Bush regime would like the world to think the choice is between their empire and the "axis of evil," when the real choices before the world are—or should be—more numerous. Bush strategists also see war abroad as a way of providing political cover for the president in conducting the war at home, the domestic front of a long-standing global effort to enforce a free market fundamentalism that includes government austerity, privatization and deregulation.

The heart of Bush's domestic programs are tax cuts highly skewed to the rich. Besides proposing to eliminate taxation of dividends, Bush outlined three new tax-sheltered savings vehicles that will mainly benefit the very affluent. He would make permanent the 2001 tax cuts (including income tax rate cuts and elimination of the estate tax). In addition, the administration promises to deliver a costly adjustment to the "alternative minimum tax." A host of other tax cuts include an expensive refundable tax credit for buying private health insurance, which is part of Bush's multifaceted effort to further privatize health care. The same federal money would be far more productively spent on expanding and improving Medicare to cover everyone.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities calculates that Bush's new tax cuts will cost more than \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years—and the cost to the federal budget of some proposals would continue to escalate even beyond that time. Taken together, the tax cuts enacted or proposed since Bush took office would cost \$4.4 trillion, a proportionately far bigger revenue loss

than Reagan's policies of the early '80s. But even this understates the costs, because many state taxes, tied to federal policies, also have been placed on the chopping block.

Having come into office with a large budget surplus, the administration projects a record deficit of \$300 billion this year—not counting the cost of a war. More serious, however, is that even Bush's own budget proposals forecast a deficit of \$200 billion a year after the economy recovers. That gaping hole doesn't include many tax cuts, and it completely excludes the cost of a war in Iraq and subsequent occupation. Running a short-term deficit to stimulate the economy can make sense—especially if policy-makers direct government spending (or tax cuts) to low-income households or to accelerating needed public and private investment. But the long-term structural deficits put in place by Bush's programs would be a drag on the economy, most notably through increasing interest rates.

**D**espite the administration's rhetoric, the point of the tax cuts is not really to stimulate the economy. Rather, the aim is to shift the burden of taxes away from investment income and toward either taxation of consumption—which the president's Council of Economic Advisers advocates as a replacement for the income tax—or toward a less progressive income tax. In either case, the rich benefit enormously and almost exclusively, since much of the investment income that goes to middle-income households, such as in pension plans, is already tax-sheltered (and the poor have no investment income).

But beyond being regressive and unfair, this shift of the tax burden will make it harder to win future support for government programs. Less money will be available to government, and that money will be drawn more heavily from those who



# Mirroring al-Qaeda, Bush's fundamentalism is a zealous ideological quest for empire that justifies violent means and tolerates no dissent

have the least. This is the heart of the administration's strategy, as increasing numbers of conservative commentators, including Nobel Prize-winners Milton Friedman and Gary Becker have made clear.

Whatever damage is done to the economy and the social fabric is all worthwhile, they argue, because huge structural deficits will force the government to cut spending and shrink. For example, Becker wrote in his *Business Week* column, "Deficits created by lower tax rates may be the only effective way to curb the perpetual desire of politicians and interest groups to increase outlays on their favorite projects."

Add in the rise in military spending, the uncalculated costs of war in Iraq, and burgeoning "homeland security" spending (especially if there is backlash from U.S. attacks on Iraq), and both the deficits and crunch on government social spending deepen. That will make it hard to protect what exists, let alone enact new and needed initiatives. The lessons from decades of tax and budget politics seem clear. Running campaigns against tax increases is more potent than championing balanced budgets, the old Republican mainstream conservative position now adopted by most Democrats—who should instead be championing progressive taxation and more spending on crucial social needs.

**B**ush's budget for the current fiscal year proposed slashing many already underfunded programs. He wanted to effectively cut job training, Head Start, public housing vouchers, low-income heating assistance, aid to dislocated workers, youth training and childcare funding, to name just a few. Overall, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities calculates, Bush is proposing to cut more than 4 percent from programs targeted to low-income households.

Next year's budget would continue to pare back the same social programs. Under the guise of increasing state flexibility, it would cut funding for Medicaid, says Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. There will be new, stricter standards of eligibility for many programs that help low-income families. The limits set under federal voucher programs to help low-income renters would be turned into price floors, squeezing those who are most vulnerable and increasing homelessness.

Funding for education would increase but still be \$6 billion less than Bush promised in his "No Child Left Behind" legislation. Bush's proposal to add new prescription drug benefits to Medicare, but limit them to people who choose private health care plans, would undermine the current system of guaranteeing the same coverage for all Medicare beneficiaries. Worse, the plan would restrict the options available to people on Medicare who need benefits the most.

The failure of the Bush administration to offer any aid to financially troubled states and localities, while worsening their fiscal crisis through new tax cuts, also will result in the deep

erosion of important public services. Combined with layoffs of state and local government workers, such retrenchment not only hurts needy families, but further depresses a shaky economy. State governments face deficits estimated as high as \$85 billion for the upcoming state fiscal year, equivalent to nearly one-fifth of state revenues, but nearly all of them are forced to balance their budgets. One result of the conservative abandonment of government responsibilities to the states—almost certainly intentional—will be deeper cutbacks in any govern-

ment role except that of the police and military.

The combined federal and state deficits will grow under the Bush plan, thus setting up a potentially lethal collision with the needs of Social Security and Medicare in years to come. While the threat of Social Security shortfalls has been widely overstated, Bush's tax cuts and deficit strategy add to the difficulties in assuring that Social Security will be adequately funded. But conservatives hope to exploit a crisis in order to privatize Social Security, destroying the bedrock of America's modest experiments in social democracy.

Bush has already made it clear that the war at home—often linked with the "war against terrorism"—is directed toward unions: He intervened in the West Coast longshore workers' contract dispute last fall, moved to deny union rights to many federal workers, and plans to privatize the jobs of 1 million federal workers.

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay underscored that offensive with his January letter—which he subsequently denied authorizing—on behalf of the anti-union National Right to Work Foundation. In a striking inversion of reality, DeLay claimed that "union bosses strive to use the war on terror as a cover for a new drive for power." The letter with his signature said that the "power grab" by Big Labor "presents a clear-and-present danger to the security of the United States at home and the safety of our Armed Forces overseas."

**S**ome Bush administration strategists justify a pre-emptive strike against Iraq as a "liberation" effort through which the United States would impose a new democratic regime that would spread throughout the Middle East. But the attacks on democracy at home make such claims to spread democracy overseas ring hollow. Likewise, the failure of the United States to provide substantial aid to Afghanistan once again illustrates how this administration is interested only in wielding military power. Rosy projections about Iraq's future seem dubious at best.

The record, going back long before Bush, is clear: Washington is quite willing to tolerate friendly tyrants, even if it slightly prefers docile, nominally democratic regimes that bow to U.S. influence and the dictates of global financial markets.

The real agenda, however, is not democracy. The Bush administration's agenda is to assert the political and military supremacy of the United States to advance the cause of free market, corporate fundamentalism. The war in Iraq fits neatly into that strategy. So does the war at home. ■

# BUSH BULLIES THE WORLD

Outrage at the arrogant administration  
won't stop the war juggernaut

By Ian Williams



## United Nations

**B**efore the fog of war comes the drizzle of diplomacy. While the TV trucks line up outside the United Nations, Washington has already made the important decision. There almost certainly will be a war against Iraq within weeks. U.S. forces will be in place by the end of February, when the desert temperatures start rising.

The question is whether the invasion will be unilateral and rip up the U.N. Charter, or whether it has a U.N. resolution behind it—and the odds are that it will. This will not be because Colin Powell's forensic advocacy, let alone George Bush's intellectual prowess, has convinced delegates of the morality of the case. Powell's February 5 presentation of "evidence" was not an ultimatum to Iraq—but a message to other Security Council members about the inevitability of an attack. The United States is prepared to wreck the organization if it does not get its way.

None of the Security Council members believe Saddam Hussein is "innocent," but they are understandably reluctant to have him found guilty and executed on Bush's unsubstantiated word, especially when they are being insulted and threatened by diplomats of the caliber of Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz or John Bolton, whose professional forebears probably negotiated the beginning of the Hundred Years War.

However, under Powell's influence, and facing the increased resistance engendered by such tactics, the administration has finally admitted publicly that it would indeed like a second Security Council resolution to support the war. Powell calculates that many other Security Council members will, no matter how reluctantly, prefer to see a U.N.-mandated operation they are uncomfortable with than the even more odious precedent of a unilateral pre-emptive strike. Just as they greeted with a sigh of relief Bush's initial announcement last September that he was prepared to go the U.N. route, they will rationalize this one. If you jump on board a moving juggernaut,





Most countries saw Colin Powell as the man of peace, holding back the baying dogs of war. They almost certainly misread his intentions.

you have more chance of a say in how it is driven than if you are under the wheels.

It is worth remembering how we reached this point. It is now just over a year since George W. Bush perplexed the world with his discovery of the "axis of evil." Consider that when the axis was unveiled, the countries of the world were in unprecedented and, in most cases, genuine unity with the United States over the "War on Terror" following September 11.

Now, wherever there are cracks in the global body politic, the United States has turned them into chasms. It has split the European Union, hamstrung NATO, and has the United Nations wallowing between the Scylla of impotence and the Charybdis of complicity. Long-standing U.S. allies like France and Germany are seething with rage under a barrage of gratuitous insults from the Bush cabal and their supporting chorus in the media. A British prime minister, who is a member of the Socialist International, stands with the political descendants of Mussolini and Franco to push for a pre-emptive war.

The effects are so far-reaching that it almost looks like a cunning plot to destabilize the world—but in fact is the result of the incompetence, irrationality, arrogance and insularity of the Bush administration.

Only Colin Powell has sounded as if he were on the same planet as the rest of us. So most friendly countries have seen it as their task to boost Powell as the voice of reason in the Bush cabinet. In doing so, they almost certainly misread his intentions. They saw him as the man of peace, holding back the baying dogs of war in the administration. In fact, he is better cast as the tortoise in the Aesop's fable, whose slow but

sure progress will in fact win the race over the impatient—and, frankly, stupid—hares like Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Bolton. The secretary of state wants a regime change in Baghdad and is prepared to go to war if that is the only way to do so. Where he differs from the chicken hawks in the administration is that he would prefer to do it peacefully or, failing that, at least "legally" through the United Nations.

Powell's motivation seems to be both principled and pragmatic: He is aware of the importance of international law, not least for a country invoking it as the reason for going to war. And being less geographically challenged than his cabinet colleagues, he realizes a U.N. resolution is the best way to secure the support of Iraq's neighbors, from whose territory a successful assault must be launched.

Other countries have responded to Powell's rationality and diplomacy, and it was a triumph for him that the Security Council unanimously backed Resolution 1441 in November. Whenever he could, he stuck to the official story that military action against Iraq would be a regrettable consequence of the failure of Saddam Hussein to disarm in accordance with Security Council decisions. With that factual and legal logic, he was able to seduce the allies gradually until he almost certainly had the votes ready for war at the first overt sign of Iraqi intransigence.

But whenever he got the diplomatic ducks in a row, suddenly the chicken hawks would appear and frighten them off. Other cabinet members would pipe up with views that other governments considered illegal and even irrational. They or the president would announce that the purpose was not just disarmament, but "regime change." In the name of disarmament, they openly discussed the use of nuclear weapons. The rest

of the Bush administration insisted they did not need a further mandate from the United Nations to attack Iraq. Indeed, some of them dismissed the idea that they needed a U.N. mandate at all—past, present or future.

Occasionally they invoked humanitarian intervention, since as Bush pointed out to the United Nations last September, Saddam Hussein is a bloodthirsty tyrant. This only hardened Russian and Chinese opposition. The idea of democratization is even more risible. There is no way the United States wants a Shia majority in Iraq. And using the Turkish military to put pressure on its elected government to support an invasion, when 85 percent of Turks oppose it, does not set a very good democratic example.

Then, of course, an attack is sold as part of the war on terrorism, since Baghdad may at some point pass on its weaponry to terrorists. Iraq was behind September 11, Bush hinted, and if Americans believed him, no one else did. One hopes for Powell's reputation as the sane one that he was loyally following someone else's script when he tried to prove the al-Qaeda connection to the Security Council.

Whatever the rationale, the administration also had to glide past the question of priorities. Why assemble a quarter of a million troops to go after Saddam Hussein while Osama bin Laden is happily addressing the world and North Korea openly announces its intention to build nuclear weapons?

**V**arious artificial deadlines provoked upsurges of impatience among the hawks. As the Iraqis first accepted the resolution, then allowed inspectors, the gnashing of teeth became audible. A continuous susurrus of complaints from "White House sources" accused the inspectors of indolence, inefficiency and even hinting at outright collusion with Iraq. The inspectors, meanwhile, complained about the lack of information coming from U.S. intelligence.

Then came Hans Blix and Mohammed ElBaradei's report on their inspectors' work. If they had reported serious non-cooperation from the Iraqis, a resolution would have been forthcoming. Some reporters allowed their enthusiasm to run away with them and glossed Blix's report as contradicting Powell's evidence. In fact, Blix makes plain that he thinks the Iraqis are hiding weapons programs, hence his mantra that Baghdad is cooperating in form but not substance. And he knows that only the build-up of U.S. forces got the inspectors back into Iraq in the first place.

The issue is "due process," which Washington wants to suspend internationally, just as John Ashcroft wants to do at home for everyone but Enron executives. While the U.S. press present Germany's Gerhard Schröder and France's Jacques Chirac as "isolated" (and belittle their filibustering alongside Belgium at NATO meetings), opinion polls show that more than three-quarters of the European Union, including the populations of Britain and Spain, agree with them. Indeed, although you would never guess it from watching CNN or FOX News, a majority of Americans may think along similar lines.

That brings us back to the United Nations. The Bush administration hates to admit it, but a U.N. resolution would do much to neutralize the opposition. The phone calls to presidents and prime ministers of the Security Council members have already begun. Despite the self-contradictory, irrational and antagonistic messages Bush has been sending the world, he has won the argument. Misreading Teddy Roosevelt's dictum, he has raved and shouted—but he remembered to bring

the big stick. (Not to mention Time Warner and News Corp. to spread the message.)

France and Germany are not arguing about the guilt or innocence of Saddam Hussein, but about the behavior of the United States. And they have every reason to do so. The administration is trying to frame a guilty man and lead a lynch mob to execute him. The opposition wants at least to try alternative means of containment and disarmament. But in the end, by signing on for Resolution 1441, they did agree to the possible use of force when other methods failed.

Diplomats who have seen the draft resolution being prepared say that it is unlikely to include any explicit references to authorizing occupation. While the White House happily plans for an American vice-royalty, the State Department may soon be pointing out the need for yet another U.N. resolution to put a light-blue fig leaf on the occupation. While oil is not the determining factor in the administration's irrational obsession with Iraq, it will certainly be a major detail. The Russians and French, having demonstrated their principles, want a pipe into the oil trough.

But peace marchers, beware. It is one thing to defend the law, quite another to align with the target. When the allies do go in, they will almost certainly be welcomed by many Iraqis. They will almost certainly find weapons programs, and may even find them dropping on their heads as they invade. Defectors and scientists will pour out of their labs, eager to tell all in return for amnesty. Awareness of these likelihoods will help pull over the middle ground in the Security Council as the inevitability of an attack dawns. ■

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# UNDERSTANDING NORTH KOREA



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## THE MOTIVES BEHIND KIM JONG IL'S MADNESS

By Kevin Kim

**W**hile the United States chases mobile weapons labs across the Iraqi desert, the looming crisis with North Korea moves forward by the minute. On January 31, the *New York Times* reported renewed activity at Yongbyon, the five-megawatt nuclear reactor that had been shut down since 1994. Left unchallenged, North Korea could produce as many as six nuclear weapons by June.

In response to the shocking speed of Pyongyang's latest moves, the Bush administration initially tried to suppress all Yongbyon-related intelligence. Since the secret got leaked to the *Times*, the Pentagon has placed long-range bombers on alert and brought high-level international pressure on Pyongyang—everything but the direct talks needed to defuse mounting tensions.

Bush's slipshod policies have turned the clock back to 1994, when Clinton administration negotiators reached the disarmament deal that shuttered Yongbyon. This time, the crisis began with the expulsion of U.N. inspectors after Bush's hard-line stance and "axis of evil" rhetoric provoked the crumbling Korean regime's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on January 10. While Bush officials openly sue for peace, they continue to equate any kind of concession with "blackmail."

According to James Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, North Korea admitted to its highly enriched uranium program in October. But U.S. officials omit a crucial part of Kelly's encounter. The North Koreans made an offer to Kelly that Bush refused: an end to the program and renewed inspections in return for a peace agreement and normalized relations. (One source later told *The New Yorker's* Seymour Hersh that Kelly's "script" was written by National Security Council hard-liners, giving him no room for negotiation.) Pyongyang calls Kelly's version of events "fabricated" and says it merely claimed the right to possess arms in self-defense.

Like the Kyoto Protocol, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the International Criminal Court, North Korea is an internationally recognized cause that the administration can't bring itself to understand. The administration, capable only of thinking in black and white, has failed to critically examine why North Korea would invest in a uranium enrichment project when it was committed to a bilateral agreement based on non-proliferation. The reason is clear: Pyongyang cheated because it deeply distrusts a U.S. administration that cheated all along.

**U**nder the 1994 Agreed Framework, the United States was to provide "formal assurances" not to threaten North Korea with nuclear weapons. To date, none have been given, and officials refuse to put the peaceful intentions toward the North they preach publicly on paper. Railing against the country's withdrawal from the



**Bush's hard-line policies, virulent rhetoric and refusal to negotiate have transformed North Korea's bluster into the current crisis.**

Non-Proliferation Treaty, U.S. hawks remain blind to North Korea's sovereign right to withdraw if sufficiently threatened by another overbearing signatory (not to mention that two U.S. allies in the war on terror, Israel and Pakistan, haven't signed the treaty). Yet the Bush doctrine sanctions the use of nuclear weapons, and the administration plans to create nukes primed for "deeply buried targets" like those in North Korea.

But the hypocrisy of U.S. nuclear policy is only the tip of the iceberg that has blighted relations with North Korea. "There was skepticism from the very beginning in North Korea that the U.S. really would abide by the Agreed Framework," says Charles Armstrong, a North Korea expert at Columbia University's East Asian Institute. "Although the U.S. has not explicitly violated its terms, the framework lays out a very rapid timetable of movement toward normalization that hasn't happened."

That "rapid timetable" was undermined by a Republican Congress that quickly attacked the Clinton deal as a sellout. The lifting of sanctions promised by January 1995 was delayed until June 2000 because Clinton was forced to make a secret commitment to Senate Republican leaders not to proceed until high-level discussions were held on North Korea's missiles.

Partly because of Republican foot-dragging, two 1,000-megawatt light-water nuclear reactors—which are impractical for making bombs but remain vital to the North's energy needs—will miss their 2003 target date by seven years. The heavy fuel oil shipments meant to replace electricity lost from the frozen Yongbyon reactor have been frequently delayed, and the North Koreans say the oil is barely usable.

The framework's promised "upgrade" to ambassador-level relations is nowhere in sight. North Korea has no diplomatic presence in the United States except for a U.N. mission in New York. More than 20 allies have established direct ties to Pyongyang, but the United States still uses Sweden's Embassy as a liaison.

Angered at Washington's feckless implementation of Clinton's agreement, Pyongyang has repeatedly threatened to abandon the framework since 1998. Instead of pursuing diplomatic normalization, Bush's hard-line policies, virulent rhetoric and refusal to negotiate have transformed Pyongyang's previous bluster into the current crisis.

Conservatives are quick to point out that North Korea began importing uranium-related technology in 1997. But according to Hersh, Pyongyang didn't begin enriching uranium until "sometime in 2001." The enriched-uranium project, which Armstrong calls an "insurance policy against a breakdown of the framework," was procured by suspicious North Korean hard-liners and activated by a Pyongyang forced to match Bush's hard line with an even harder one. The announcement of the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive attacks last fall only confirmed Pyongyang's worst fears. "That was what caused the final realization in North Korea that it could very well be an American target," Armstrong concludes.

One can only guess at the specific 2001 event that kick-started this "insurance policy." Perhaps it was three lawmakers' proposal in March to replace the light-water reactors with coal plants. Perhaps it was Bush's rejection of South Korean Prime Minister Kim Dae Jung's "sunshine" policy several days later at a summit during which Bush voiced "skepticism" about Kim Jong Il. (The North abruptly canceled inter-ministerial talks with the South



one week later.) Perhaps Pyongyang was patient enough to hold back until the administration's policy review unveiled tougher language, harsher criteria, and a more one-sided approach than Clinton's. Or maybe the last straw was Bush's June 30 comment to Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi calling Kim Jong Il untrustworthy because "he makes his own people go hungry."

"The Bush administration has botched our relations with North Korea terribly," says Bruce Cumings, a Korea expert at the University of Chicago. "It caused Pyongyang to repudiate the 1994 agreement. It left Clinton's missile deal sitting on the table. It's been led by the most partisan foreign policy of any administration in my memory—viewing the framework not as a solemn agreement between two nations, but something Clinton did that they could repudiate."

**W**hile spy satellites continue to monitor Yongbyon day and night, few back home remember that in late 2000 the Clinton administration came close to bagging a deal that would have averted the current stand-off. After a flurry of unprecedented diplomacy that included William Perry's agenda-setting talks with North Korean leaders, Pyongyang's second-in-command visiting Washington, and Madeleine Albright's meeting with Kim Jong Il, relations thawed to their warmest phase in history.

In late 1999, North Korea declared a moratorium on missile testing. In return, Clinton lifted trade bans. In the "sunshine" of the first-ever North-South Korea summit that June, Canada, Britain, Belgium, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands established relations with a regime that finally began putting its war toys away in order to join the world community. During Albright's visit, Kim Jong Il told his guest that the 1998 missile launch over Japan that so unnerved U.S. leaders would be the last of its kind.

In the 11th hour of his term, the stage was set for Clinton to meet the Great Leader and sign a sweeping accord that would have ended North Korea's long-range ballistic-missile program, swapped all missile exports for food, clothing and energy, and established the full diplomatic relations promised in 1994. But the "constitutional crisis" of Election 2000, in one Clinton adviser's words, rudely intervened. After Bush won in mid-December, Clinton officials briefed Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice on the imminent diplomatic breakthrough. But the Bushies, who used North Korea as justification for a multibillion-dollar National Missile Defense system, would support no such deal. Instead of pursuing the breakthrough for which Koreans on both sides of the DMZ have waited more than

50 years, the Bush White House initiated a two-year freeze in talks that ended with the Kelly confrontation last fall.

Pyongyang has been trying in its own unpredictable way to improve relations with the United States for years. Its current brinkmanship is the work of a regime in which moderates have little room left to maneuver. According to a U.N. envoy, 6 to 8 million people—nearly half the North's population—are threatened by a food shortage exacerbated by delays in U.S. food aid. The U.N. World Food Program still needs 400,000 tons of rice to stave off widespread starvation. South Korean and Chinese sources close to Pyongyang believe that the free-market reforms Kim Jong Il initiated last July have backfired. An economic adviser to Pyongyang even whispered to the *Washington Post* that his client courts "social chaos and economic collapse."

The administration has been sensible enough not to spark a military conflagration that could cost millions of lives. It says it wants a peaceful solution to what Powell terms a "diplomatic problem." But so far, the Bush team's only major diplomatic initiative has been to send Powell and Richard Armitage to the Senate to calm down the antsy Foreign Relations Committee.

Downplaying the urgency of the crisis and relying on regional allies to do the talking won't work. South Korean envoys have been stiff-armed, Australia's turned up empty-handed in mid-January, and China won't even act because, in the mysterious words of its Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, "a lock can only be opened by one key." Three days after Russia held the most promising talks to date with North Korea on January 20, it threw the ball into Bush's court by calling for "direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang."

Before the ball turns radioactive, the Bush team will have to learn how to humble itself enough to engage, face-to-face, the government of a dictator Bush dismissed as a "pygmy." There isn't a single good reason to delay talks settling North Korea's security concerns, economic needs, and desire for normalized relations. Those talks should have happened two years ago. Every day that passes without a non-aggression pledge reinforces the belief of Pyongyang hard-liners that North Korea's fate is intertwined with Iraq's. "The North Koreans are smart enough not to wait for Bush to vanquish Iraq and then turn his attention to them," Cumings warns.

**C**onservative opinion to the contrary, North Korea is not a crazed rogue state, but an embattled regime trying to reverse 50 years of isolation and failed domestic policies. Even its current brinkmanship, according to a former Clinton Pentagon official, is "purely rational for a nation with no assets being threatened by the world's major power."

North Korea renounced international terrorism in 2000, has not been conclusively linked to a terrorist act in nearly 15 years, and sells missiles only as an indispensable source of income. Seeking financial ties with the West, Pyongyang has repeatedly

expressed interest in the international lending institutions to which U.S. officials hold the keys. Even the timing of its unilateralist moves reflects the regime's underlying sensitivity to international law. Its adherence to the framework, which a senior North Korean official said was "hanging by a thread" in November, was not cut off until heavy fuel oil shipments ended last December—a checkmate move seen by Pyongyang as the end to the only one of the four articles of the framework that has been observed by the United States.

Pyongyang has stressed its desire for a diplomatic solution to the crisis since last October. Instead of sending senior officials to the United Nations to make cases for war, the administration should send an advance peace delegation to North Korea to establish dialogue as a foundation for the arduous negotiations ahead. As Perry did in 1999, Powell and company should begin the preliminary

talks with a solemn acknowledgment of Korea's difficult history, ending with a recognition of recent bilateral difficulties and the Bush administration's missteps.

Short of a formal apology, such a gesture would go a long way toward regaining Pyongyang's trust and goodwill. "America is afraid to say 'sorry' because it's tantamount to an admission of guilt," says Katharine Moon, a former Clinton State Department adviser. "But Koreans just say 'sorry' before negotiations start between two parties. Officials will have to account for these kinds of legal and cultural differences."

Before laying out a tough agenda for the negotiations Bush promises after new South Korean President Roh Moon Hyun takes office on February 25, peace delegates should offer the written non-aggression pledge that North Korean officials recently said would satisfy Pyongyang's demands for a formal peace treaty. "Nice words will be answered by nice words," North Korea's U.N. ambassador promised one week after Bush's "axis of evil" speech in 2002.

If Bush really cares about Kim Jong Il's starving people and the dangers of proliferating nukes, immediate peace talks must be held before the situation worsens. Clinton's framework failed to comprehensively ban North Korea's nuclear program because it was negotiated between two nations on the brink of war. Having created the current crisis, Bush must now pre-empt Pyongyang's nukes by doing what he "loathes": directly approaching Pyongyang and pledging peace in exchange for arms control agreements, nuclear disarmament, economic aid and diplomatic normalization. Preliminary talks must take place before any resolution of the Iraq question; the closer the United States edges toward war with Iraq, the sooner North Korea develops nuclear weapons as a deterrent and as a precious export for U.S.-hating rogues abroad.

Pyongyang's hard-liners softened in 2000, opening up the possibilities of a bilateral relationship based on peace and tentative disarmament after 50 years of episodic conflict and relentless confrontation. Will Washington's hard-liners do the same before it's too late? ■

Kevin Kim was a 2001-2002 Fulbright Scholar in South Korea.

## **"THE NORTH KOREANS ARE SMART ENOUGH NOT TO WAIT FOR BUSH TO VANQUISH IRAQ AND THEN TURN HIS ATTENTION TO THEM."**

# Seize the Day

By Darryl Cater

**T**om Stoppard is not exactly the first playwright one would expect to write a 12-hour, three-play historical seminar on the origins of Russian socialism.

Known best for Wildean wit-fests on philosophical, scientific and artistic questions, Stoppard spent much of his career dodging questions about being apolitical and eventually came out as a "small c" conservative (at least by the standards of late-'70s England, where the spectrum swung a bit further to the left). He even, temporarily, endorsed Margaret Thatcher.

But in *The Coast of Utopia*, a new trilogy of Stoppard plays that recently finished a four-month run at the Royal National Theatre, the heroes are all socialists and the chief question is one dear to the sort of leftists Sir Tom once alienated: Why is it we never made it to the utopia envisioned by the socialists of yesteryear?

In this massively ambitious trilogy, with more than 70 characters, 30 actors and 300 costumes, Stoppard traces the 19th-century philosophies and personalities

Pushkin, it is in Herzen that Stoppard finds a mirror for his own views.

I was one of the audience members who elected to see the whole cycle in one day,

Byron, Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe and the rest" (so says Stoppard's colorful version of the influential Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky). Then God said, let there be Pushkin. And Gogol. And by the end of the trilogy (1868), everyone has a much better idea of why Chekhov and Gorky are to come next.

The first play, *Voyage*, plays Stoppardian games with its chronology, but the themes are pure Chekhov: Here are restless rural Russians, luxuriating in an estate manned by the serving classes, feeling the first blushes of social change from Moscow. But this is 60 years before Chekhov began writing, and the restless Russians here will actually make Chekhov's serfless Russia happen.

The estate Stoppard shows us is owned by the family of Michael Bakunin, a student who will become an anarchist revolutionary and who, for us, is a one-man dramatization of Russia's philosophical progression toward Marxism. Bakunin is obsessed with Schelling's notion that the inner life is real, and all external life is

illusion: a great excuse for a life of poetry while the czar crushes all challenges to the status quo of Slavic slavery. But Bakunin can't avoid the impact of this exterior reality, so it's forget Schelling, "Fichte is the man!" And then, just as all of Michael's friends have started reading Fichte, "Hegel is the man!"

Hegel, of course, will become "the man" not only to Bakunin but also to Marx. The German's view of history as a deterministic march of progress will become the foundation of Marx's world-changing prediction of capitalism's doom, and Bakunin will be one of thousands of European leftists to find faith in a future proletarian revolution.

By the second play, *Shipwreck*, Bakunin is off to Paris to egg on the uprising of *les misérables* in 1848, but Europe's voyage of radical agitation hits the rocks when France's second republic elects another Napoleon.



Tom Stoppard

from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. (such day-trippers get £5 off the cost, which still ranged up to £40 for each of the three plays). Like many critics, I found it hard to keep track of the many double-cast actors playing all these Natalies (there are three) and Nicholasas (there are six), but as the thousands who buy Stoppard's scripts on show nights know, the properly equipped observer should find the shows as enlightening and entertaining as exhausting and exhaustive. The trilogy will almost certainly be heading to America next, though it may not come in the costly, challenging "trilogy day" format offered by the government-subsidized Royal National Theatre.

**S**toppard gears up like he's preparing to teach a survey course on Russian history: In the beginning (1833), Russian literature was little more than a costume ball of fakers "where everybody has to come dressed up as somebody else—

## The Coast of Utopia A trilogy of plays by Tom Stoppard

that simultaneously laid the groundwork for the world-changing Russian revolutions of 1917 and transformed Russia from a quasi-European backwater with little literature of its own into one of the world's most famously rich literary scenes.

The hero of the trilogy, Alexander Herzen, thought to be Russia's first self-declared socialist, is little known even to those who consider themselves conversant in the history of Russia or socialism. While the trilogy places many such quietly influential historical Rosencrantzes and Guildensterns alongside comparative celebs like Marx and Turgenev and



Meanwhile, the drama begins to morph into a more linear biography of Herzen, a school friend of Bakunin's who preceded the anarchist into the dissident breach.

In the third play, *Salvage*, Herzen joins a ridiculously large crowd of exiled liberals in London picking up the pieces of the '48 disaster. There, he establishes an agitprop journal that will garner, for a time, fans among the various revolutionary troupes and even (it was rumored) in the palace of the reformist Czar Alexander II.

**T**his may seem a surprising set of heroes coming from Stoppard, who described himself 24 years ago as a "conservative in politics, literature, education and theater." The playwright repeatedly fended off questions about his avoidance of political themes throughout the first decade of his career, when leftist protest theater was all the rage. At first he answered the complaints with dismissive flippancy ("I have the courage of my lack of convictions"), but in the late '70s, he issued a number of political works in short succession: *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*, *Cahoot's MacBeth* and *Professional Foul* all took thematic aim at Soviet repression.

Perhaps the closest Stoppard has come to the political history of *The Coast of Utopia* is a TV movie about the Polish Solidarity movement called *Squaring the Circle*. Stoppard's central question was whether the version of freedom espoused by the free trade union Solidarity was, in the playwright's words, "reconcilable with socialism as defined by the Eastern European Communist bloc." His answer was "no."

He voiced support for Thatcher in her early years as prime minister, although he largely limited his praise to comments about her candor and her efforts to bust the British newspaper unions. The latter issue was a personal matter for Stoppard: As a young journalist, he was suspended for refusing to participate in a strike, and he blamed the unions for what he felt amounted to blackmail and censorship. (He later took heat from leftist corners for having written about this in his 1978 play *Night and Day*.)

Eventually he backed off his support of Thatcher, acknowledging the social costs of some of her policies. Still, he has consistently voiced a strong belief that absolute moral values must guide public decisions, and he has lobbied actively for human rights. In a 1974 interview that echoed speeches in his play *Travesties*, Stoppard

batted back questions about the lack of political content in his plays with a lengthy description of why "Marx got it wrong."

"It was only a matter of time," Stoppard said, "before somebody—it turned out to be [moderate German socialist Eduard] Bernstein in 1900—somebody with the benefit of an extra 50 years' hindsight, would actually point out that Marx had got it wrong, but that it didn't matter because social justice was going to come through other means. Bernstein reckoned that the class war wasn't the way, that human solidarity was a better bet than class solidarity."

Only about five years ago, Stoppard came across for the first time another socialist who voiced similar concerns in Marx's own time: Herzen. A rival of Marx's, the Russian socialist hoped like Bernstein that voters of all classes would freely choose to equal out the world's ugly

**"People don't storm the Bastille because history proceeds by zigzags. History zigzags because when people have had enough, they storm the Bastille."**

est disparities. He derided Hegel's deterministic worldview. "People don't storm the Bastille because history proceeds by zigzags," Stoppard's Herzen declares. "History zigzags because when people have had enough, they storm the Bastille." History has no plan, he says, so what happens next is up to you.

Meanwhile, Stoppard shows the difficulty of arranging utopian happiness in the realm of sexual politics. Herzen and his lifetime friend Nicholas Ogarev were influenced by the French socialist Saint Simeon, who favored (as Ogarev quips) "the organization of society by experts, and as much you-know-what as you want." But Herzen is devastated by his wife's affair with another man, and later complicates his friendship with the Ogarevs by engaging in an openly sexual relationship with his best friend's wife. "What is the largest number of individuals who can pull this trick off?" Herzen asks. "I would say it's

smaller than a nation, smaller than the ideal communities of Cabet or Fourier. I would say the largest number is smaller than three. Two is possible, if there is love, but two is not a guarantee."

**I**n fact, at the end of the day, both Herzen and Stoppard have given up any hope that we will ever reach the coast of Utopia.

"What I believe in is that Utopia is an incoherent concept," Stoppard told the BBC last year, "that there is no overall right answer to all these questions which have puzzled people for several thousand years."

What next, if not utopia? Audiences, heads aswim with new names and dates, might note with surprise how little light the 12-hour day has shed on Stoppard's political views. It's unlike Stoppard, who has always aimed to write for the ages and not for the dailies, to offer much in the way of policy specifics. Topicality is yesterday's news, particularly when so many of one's favorite writers are dead.

He's also a cautious sort. "I think I have as much right—and no more than anyone else—to have an opinion," said the characteristically humble Stoppard in 1999. "Something in me resists the idea that I should be taking an interest. I simply don't. When a local issue happens, I'm always surprised that everyone around me immediately knows what they think. I don't know what to think."

One suspects Stoppard has a particularly high threshold for what it takes to "know" something. He spent years working to make this play painstakingly accurate, and he has confessed to being almost obsessional about it. Stoppard's previous biographical plays have almost all cast skepticism on the accuracy of biography (*Arcadia*, *The Invention of Love*, *Indian Ink*), and many of his plays question the knowability of anything at all.

Perhaps for this reason, Stoppard's intellectual searches on public issues (if not artistic, scientific or private issues) almost always end with the moral basics. He has suggested that children are often better at moral decisions than intellectuals, since adults can be so good at arguing their way into or out of anything. In *Professional Foul*, an ethics professor refuses to smuggle the contraband writings of a Czech dissident (modeled in part on Vaclav Havel, of whom Stoppard is both a friend and a fan) on the grounds that smuggling is unethical. Ultimately,

he decides the reverse is true. Like Bakunin, he stops treating philosophical ideas as pliable fictions and takes political action based on what Stoppard believes to be patently obvious moral absolutes.

**B**y the end of *The Coast of Utopia*, Herzen predicts he will be a custodian of the revolution, overseeing the damage of the violent era. It's a poignant line, seemingly voicing the playwright's

regret that his hero's visions of social change were co-opted and trampled upon in favor of a century of repressive faux Marxism. One wonders whether, alongside the grief, Stoppard may also be offering hope that Herzen's aims for yesterday are today imminently achievable. "A distant end is not an end but a trap," Herzen tells Marx in a dream sequence near the end of the trilogy. "The end we work for must be closer, the laborer's wage, the

pleasure in the work done, the summer lightning of personal happiness."

Ideas have legs, Stoppard suggests. They may not take us where we expect to go, especially if that place is "no place" (the literal meaning of "utopia"). But when guided principally by the most obvious of moral values, they can change the world for the better. ■

Darryl Cater is a writer based in Chicago.

## Road Killers

By Roberto González

**T**he American tradition of muck-raking journalism includes such classics as Ralph Nader's *Unsafe at Any Speed* and Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, books that dramatically provided clear, concise and compelling information to the general public about issues affecting health and safety. To this list we can add *High and Mighty* by New York Times reporter Keith

Bradsher, who chronicles the creation and rapid ascent of sport-utility vehicles in American life.

From 1996 to 2001, Bradsher was the *Times*' Detroit bureau chief and met many auto industry executives, lobbyists, engineers, advertising agents and politicians. His exposé reveals how, over three decades, corporations and government officials

sacrificed highway safety and air quality to boost profits.

Bradsher focuses on the ways automakers persuaded the Department of Transportation and the Environmental

### High and Mighty: SUVs—The World's Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got that Way

By Keith Bradsher  
Public Affairs  
468 pages, \$28

Protection Agency to classify SUVs as "light trucks" rather than automobiles. This allowed GM, Ford and Chrysler to exempt their products from auto-safety, fuel-efficiency and emissions regulations. Light-truck exemptions were part of a series of measures established in the '60s to protect American manufacturers from foreign competitors. But under pressure from industry lobbyists, DOT and EPA officials continued to bend these rules throughout the '70s while Congress turned a blind eye.

During this time (and into the '80s), SUVs represented only a small percentage of the total vehicles sold in the United States. In the '90s, however, sales accelerated as the Big Three discovered that they could make huge profits with SUVs. Profits of up to \$15,000 per vehicle were possible simply by taking a pickup chassis, fitting it with a roof, leather seats and premium sound system, and selling it as a luxury vehicle. Soon Japanese and German companies were entering the market, evading tariffs by constructing assembly plants in the United States.

Government officials, meanwhile, continued to count SUVs as light trucks, and the Clinton-Gore administration did nothing to change this policy—even as SUV market share increased from 6.7



TERRY LABAN

percent of new vehicle sales in 1991 to 17 percent in 2000. Automakers used loopholes "to crank out huge numbers of SUVs without fear of violating fuel-economy, safety or pollution rules." The results of these policies have been utterly devastating in environmental terms: Today 20 million SUVs, half of which are less than five years old, emit up to twice as much carbon dioxide per mile as the typical car.

## Says one auto marketing guru: "SUV buyers want to be able to take on street gangs with their vehicles and run them down."

Bradsher also presents evidence to demonstrate SUVs' deadly toll on traffic safety. Because of SUVs' high centers of gravity, the rollover death rate for SUVs is twice as high as that of cars. Most SUVs have extraordinarily high "kill rates" because they are built upon stiff truck chassis, causing them to transfer impact forces to their occupants. (By contrast, engineers design cars with impact-absorbing "crumple zones" that protect passengers.) Moreover, Bradsher points out that four-wheel drive highway safety is a myth, since heavy vehicles require significantly longer stopping distances than cars. Finally, SUVs are especially lethal for other motorists, since they ride high and easily slide over cars' bumpers and door sills—directly into passenger compartments.

A particularly fascinating chapter, "Reptile Dreams," reveals marketers' efforts to make SUVs "appeal to people's most primitive instincts—survival and reproduction." In an interview with Chrysler marketing guru Clotaire Rapaille, Bradsher describes how SUVs are designed to appeal to Americans' fears of crime and other perceived safety threats. Rapaille believes that "SUV buyers want to be able to take on street gangs with their vehicles and run them down." Fewer than 10 percent of SUV buyers ever drive off-road, but the image of power and personal security appeals to many.

Marketers also believe that SUVs are popular because they exude machismo. They claim that SUV buyers "are frequently nervous about their marriages and uncomfortable about parenthood." David Bostwick, Chrysler's marketing research director, candidly states that "if you have a sport utility, you can have the smoked windows, put the children in the back and pretend you're still single."

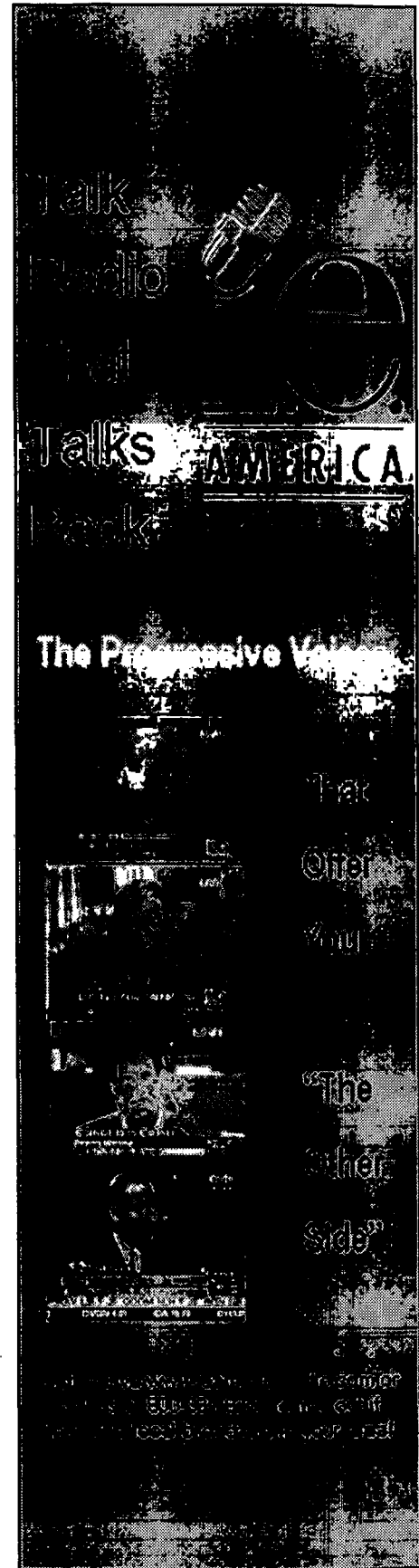
The overall effect of the SUV craze is a "highway arms race" characterized by increasingly oversized and deadly vehicles. The real crisis is only now beginning, as millions of used vehicles are resold to younger (and more reckless) drivers, putting all of us in greater peril. Though Bradsher acknowledges that "with so many factories now geared up to produce SUVs, the problems are likely to become more serious in the coming years, not better," he concludes by optimistically making proposing concrete measures to make roads safer.

The book links SUVs to global warming, but the author might have taken this one step further by considering how they impede American energy independence. Our country has 5 percent of the world's population yet consumes 20 percent of its oil, and SUVs are no help.

Bradsher's research also provokes deeper questions about the culture of mass consumption. Reading his book, I was struck by a curious coincidence: Americans and their vehicles are getting bulkier at the same time. (Today, 31 percent of Americans are obese.) Is there an underlying reason for U.S. overconsumption of food and oil? And what roles do corporations play in the creation of our supersized society?

Answers to these questions might fill another book, but by itself *High and Mighty* remains a searing critique of the mechanisms by which corporations and a compromised political system needlessly endanger millions of lives daily. This powerful piece of investigative journalism is required reading for anyone wishing to understand the auto industry, regulatory politics and the sometimes deadly relationship between the two. ■

**Roberto J. González** is assistant professor of anthropology at San Jose State University.





# The Body Politic

By V.A. Otis

**T**wo years ago, at the invitation of the U.N. Population Fund, I traveled to Nicaragua for a few weeks to learn firsthand about some of the reproductive health programs that had been set

## The Country Under My Skin:

### Memoir of Love and War

By Gioconda Belli

Alfred A. Knopf

380 pages, \$25

up for women living in rural areas. I went prepared to see poverty—after all, Nicaragua had been embroiled in a civil war until 1979, and then a vicious power struggle between the socialist Sandinista government and the U.S.-supported Contras well into the '80s.

But I didn't expect to find so many women living in appalling, oppressive conditions. Domestic violence is present in almost every household, and even the most basic health and reproductive care is largely inaccessible outside Managua. Women still need their husbands' written permission for any surgical procedures affecting fertility, such as tubal ligations. I spent the entire trip wondering: What had become of the progressive, post-dictatorship agenda that had touted full equality for all? Where were the gains that so many women had fought and died for during the Sandinista Revolution?

More recently, I came across a new book by acclaimed Nicaraguan poet Gioconda Belli, *The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War*. There, encrypted within the author's typically luminous prose, were the answers to many of my questions. Unlike her best known novel, *La Mujer Habitada* (a thinly veiled story of a young Nicaraguan debutante whose burgeoning feminist sensibilities awaken her to the larger economic and racial injustices in her country under the Somoza dictatorship), Belli's latest work is a passionate recounting of her years as a Sandinista revolutionary. She's as brutally honest about the failings of her political party as she is about some of her own choices.

Belli has often written about her body as a metaphor for her country, and now

she describes in frank detail the degree to which she lived that metaphor. At every stage of her journey, there's a new passion. Her husband, whom she married at 19 in her haste for adult life to begin—and with whom she had two daughters—was quickly replaced in her affections, first by a poet who encouraged her to write and introduced her to bohemian Managua, then by a guerrilla fighter who was killed by Somoza's National Guard.

Before the Sandinista victory, she worked underground, using her day job in an advertising agency as a cover for collecting information and filing reports to the Sandinistas on prominent citizens. She worked as a courier, ferrying money and weapons. She had to flee into exile, was tried in absentia and sentenced to

Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, Libya and Algeria. Then there were the crude propositions she got from Omar Torrijos, the dictator of Panama, and the more subtle come-ons by Fidel Castro.

Some purists of the political memoir genre might decry the inclusion of such salacious details, but, as Belli points out, being sexualized even while in full battle garb was (and still is) a reality for women in progressive movements. And, to give Belli further credit, she's willing to go where few feminists will and admit she had a role in creating that dichotomy: "I had exposed myself to bullets, death; I had smuggled weapons, given speeches, received awards, had children—so many things, but a life without men, without love, was alien to me, I felt I had no existence unless a man's voice said my name and a man's love rendered my life worthwhile."

Belli's own disillusionment with the Sandinistas, concealed at the time, is also



Nicaraguan women and children still lack basic health care.

seven years in jail, then flew back to Managua the day after the fall of the dictatorship bearing the first edition of the new government's newspaper.

**B**ut there's plenty more to the book than Belli's emotional ups and downs. Personal anecdotes complement rather than dominate *The Country Under My Skin*. Two particularly great chapters touch upon Belli's tours of the former

frank in this account. The growing authoritarianism of the Ortega brothers, Humberto and Daniel (later accused by his stepdaughter of sexual abuse), as well as the recklessness with which they cultivated ties with the Soviet bloc, made them an easy target for the Reagan administration, and brought their own revolution down in flames.

The Ortegas could certainly have been wiser, but it would probably have made

no difference. The Sandinistas came to power when Jimmy Carter was president and benefited from Carter's perception that U.S. aid to Nicaragua could keep the Sandinistas out of the Soviet camp. It might have worked—had the next administration shared Carter's vision. But in Reagan, the Sandinistas encountered an enemy as ideologically determined as Fidel, and one who was not prepared to tolerate either support for El Salvador or anti-Yanqui posturing.

And it's worth noting, as Argentina's economy continues to falter and

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez staves off attempts to oust him, that many of those who brought down the Sandinistas are back in power: Otto Reich, John D. Negroponte, John Poindexter, even Ollie North's being recycled these days. It would behoove all Americans to remember that these were the men behind the Cold War millstones that ground Nicaragua and its once progressive revolution into powder. ■

V.A. Otis is a correspondent for New York's WBAI radio.

Eve Ensler's prison writing program—most of them guilty of capital crimes—and see the transformative power of brutally honest reflection and expression. Their insights overshadow the celebrity actresses, including Glenn Close and Rosie Perez, who read their work. Also in theaters, and then on POV.

**F**or adding depth, color, complexity and clarity to recent U.S. history (and, sometimes fortuitously, a highly relevant comment on today's hawkish headlines): Stanley Nelson's *The Murder of Emmett Till*, which won a special jury prize. Nancy Kates and Bennett Singer's *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* (which already aired on POV) acted as a powerful reminder of the rich stories to be told just

## Greatest Hits

By Pat Aufderheide

**D**ocumentary filmmaking was once the stepchild of the Sundance Film Festival, which sits uncomfortably astride the line between art and commerce. But the more glam the narrative features got, the more docs became the festival's guarantor of integrity. It's a

### Sundance Film Festival

lot of weight to bear, especially when "integrity" is often a code word for "can't get airtime." But many of the docs shown at Sundance this year showcased documentarians as a vital conscience within commercial culture. Some of the films are even on their way to a theater or television screen near you. Here are some of my own private Sundance celebrations, and why. And one crucial why not.

For persistence of vision, two films: First, the expectation-defying *Stevie*, which took a cinematography award. No stars, no sensationalism, no happy ending, and two-and-a-half hours long. But it has been winning prizes since it debuted in September. It opens a door into a part of American culture that has been dismissed as "trailer trash." The documentary follows director Steve James (part of the admirably committed Kartemquin crew that brought us *Hoop Dreams*) as he returns to the home of Stevie, a troubled young man he once mentored in a Big Brother program. James' best efforts to help are vivid testimony to the limits of individual do-goodism in addressing



*Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*

inequality. It will soon show in theaters, and then on HBO.

Jennifer Dworkin's five-year saga of one drug-crippled African-American urban family, *Love & Diane*, also goes beyond cliché and judgment. The driving need for recognition, respect and love in this family resonates far beyond its scorched little corner of American life. The film will show in big city theaters, then on public TV's POV.

For death-penalty-defying inspiration: *What I Want My Words To Do To You* (which won the prized Freedom of Expression award). Directors Judith Katz, Madeleine Gavin and Gary Sunshine showcase the creative and moral power of women in prison. We meet women from

below the shiny surface of textbook civil rights history. The life of Bayard Rustin, the gay civil rights activist who organized the 1963 March on Washington, is full of all-too-timely debates over how to organize for social justice.

*The Weather Underground*, a real achievement both for its groundbreaking interviews with ex-Weatherpeople and for its carefully created context to understand this homegrown terrorist movement, was made by two under-40s, Bill Siegel and Sam Green.

*An Injury to One*, Travis Wilkerson's brilliant and excoriating history of his blighted hometown of Butte, Montana—where Industrial Workers of the World organizer Frank Little was murdered and where



**The Murder of Emmett Till**

Anaconda Copper destroyed both unions and the environment (check out [www.extremelowfrequency.com](http://www.extremelowfrequency.com))—is uncompromising. It owes much stylistically to Russian formalists and ideologically to Wobbly politics and culture.

*Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives* by Ed Bell, brings historical documents alive. In the '30s, the Federal Writing Program paid journalists to record the stories of the last generation of ex-slaves. Bell's combination of readings by actors including Ruby Dee, Samuel L. Jackson and Oprah Winfrey (with Whoopi Goldberg narrating), reenactments, and historical footage and photos makes for riveting viewing. HBO plans an extensive outreach program ([www.hbo.com/unchained](http://www.hbo.com/unchained)).

For cracking the isolationist shell: Sundance programmer Diane Weyermann, who created a new Sundance category, international documentaries. The nine selected films commanded sell-out audiences, and provided a much-needed window into the larger world and current affairs. Two of my faves:

Kim Longinotto's *The Day I Will Never Forget*, soon in theaters and then on HBO, finds a story you can bear to watch on the topic of female circumcision. In Kenya, she found extraordinary young women who are resisting the dangerous operation. One 9-year-old girl becomes a heroine of the film, as she reads a poem about the

horrific experience to her mother on-camera, in order to compel her mother to promise never to do the same to her younger sister. (It works.) The child herself and a Kenyan nurse who helps girls who resist attended Sundance screenings, where audiences thronged and asked to help; distributor Women Make Movies has set up a support fund, and plans grassroots distribution in Kenya.

Brazilian José Padilha creatively reuses hours of live TV coverage of a bus hijacking in Rio de Janeiro in *Bus 174*. Taking us out beyond the story of the hijacking itself into the life of the hijacker and other street kids like him, he asks all the questions that TV journalists could and should have asked. And he puts the Brazilian state on the spot, showing how it creates street kids and then represses them with a bumbling, under-resourced police force and catastrophic prison conditions. *Bus 174*, also slated for HBO, is a powerful work of controlled anger, deploying the suspense of the real-life crisis to keep us with the story to the tragic end.

And now the why not: Sundance this year was full of documentary work that used potentially sensationalist material—slavery, sexual abuse, murder, mutilation, hijacking—to provoke, to enlighten, to change. By contrast, the Grand Jury prize winner, Andrew Jarecki's *Capturing the Friedmans*, is compelling but cruelly exploitative of its subjects to no useful end. It follows a profoundly dysfunctional Long Island family from the time that dad is picked up for mail-ordering child pornography, through the jailing of both father and youngest son for child molesting, and finally the suicide of dad in jail and release of the son.

The oldest son, who had videotaped family fights and also kept a video diary, encouraged the film in the blind belief it would vindicate his dad and brother, and damn his mother, whom he hates. The film instead exposes pain and conflict for voyeuristic pleasure. It purveys conflicting views, leaving ample room to believe both in some culpability and in police-fed mass hysteria. Family members attended the festival, only adding to the creepiness. ■

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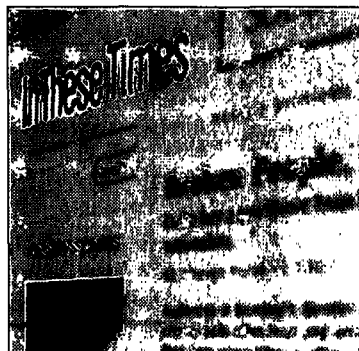
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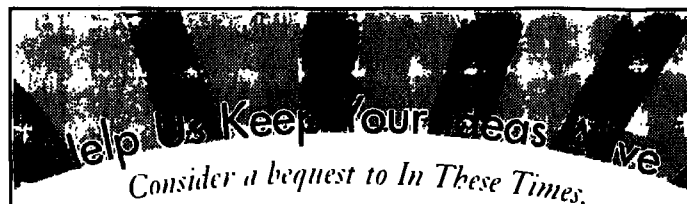
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continued from back cover

## The Olive Wood Fire

When Fergus woke crying at night.  
I would carry him from his crib  
to the rocking chair and sit holding him  
before the fire of thousand-year-old olive wood.  
Sometimes, for reasons I never knew  
and he has forgotten, even after his bottle the big tears  
would keep on rolling down his big cheeks  
—the left cheek always more brilliant than the right—  
and we would sit, some nights for hours, rocking  
in the light eking itself out of the ancient wood,  
and hold each other against the darkness,  
his close behind and far away in the future,  
mine I imagined all around.  
One such time, fallen half-asleep myself,  
I thought I heard a scream  
—a fier crying out in horror  
as he dropped fire on he didn't know what or whom,  
or else a child thus set aflame—  
and sat up alert. The olive wood fire  
had burned low. In my arms lay Fergus,  
fast asleep, left cheek glowing, God.

—Galway Kinnell

## American Wars

Like the topaz in the toad's head  
the comfort in the terrible histories  
was up front, easy to find:  
Once upon a time in a kingdom far away.  
Even to the dreadful now of news  
we listened comforted  
by far timezones, languages we didn't speak,  
the wide, forgetful oceans.  
Today, no comfort but the jewel courage.  
The war is ours, now, here, it is our republic  
facing its own betraying terror.  
And how we tell the story is forever after.

—Ursula K. Le Guin

## Speak Out

And a vast paranoia sweeps across the land  
And America turns the attack on its Twin Towers  
Into the beginning of the Third World War  
The war with the Third World

And the terrorists in Washington  
Are drafting all the young men

And no one speaks

And they are rousting out  
All the ones with turbans  
And they are flushing out  
All the strange immigrants

And they are shipping all the young men  
To the killing fields again

And no one speaks

And when they come to round up  
All the great writers and poets and painters  
The National Endowment of the Arts of Complacency  
Will not speak

While all the young men  
Will be killing all the young men  
In the killing fields again

So now is the time for you to speak  
All you lovers of liberty  
All you lovers of the pursuit of happiness  
All you lovers and sleepers  
Deep in your private dreams

Now is the time for you to speak  
O silent majority  
Before they come for you

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti



# Poets AGAINST THE WAR

By Joe Knowles

When First Lady Laura Bush decided to host a literary salon on February 12 about "Poetry and the American Voice," she invited the nation's leading poets to come to the White House for some elegant chit-chat on the works of Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman. The sleepy, grant-fed American poetry establishment, well-conditioned to sing for its supper and keep politics at arm's length, rarely dares to court controversy—especially in Washington. But Mrs. Bush was in for rather a rude surprise.

When the respected editor and poet Sam Hamill opened his invitation to tea with Laura, he writes, "I was overcome by a kind of nausea. ... Only the day before I had read a lengthy report on George Bush's proposed 'Shock and Awe' attack on Iraq, calling for saturation bombing that would be like the firebombing of Dresden or Tokyo, killing countless innocent civilians. Nor has Bush ruled out the use of nuclear weapons."

Hamill decided to make the First Lady's "symposium" very special indeed. But when Mrs. Bush got wind of plans circulating among Hamill's colleagues to bring antiwar poetry to the White House, she "postponed" the event, saying through her spokeswoman that it would be "inappropriate to turn a literary event into a political forum." The date has not been rescheduled.

Nor is it ever likely to be, judging from the reaction Hamill has been getting since he launched a Web site, [www.poetsagainsthewar.org](http://www.poetsagainsthewar.org), and declared February 12 a national day of poetry against the impending carnage in Iraq. The Web site quickly ballooned with more than 5,000 poems (and counting), and more than 160 readings were speedily scheduled across the country for the 12th. Hamill's online chapbook features poetry by the likes of John Balaban, Gregory Orr, Rita Dove, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Adrienne Rich, as well as a statement by Pulitzer Prize

winner W.S. Merwin, who angrily writes: "To arrange a war in order to be re-elected outdoes even the means employed in the last presidential election. Mr. Bush and his plans are a greater danger to the United States than Saddam Hussein."

Other poets signing on to the antiwar movement include Stanley Kunitz, Marilyn Nelson, Jay Parini, Jamaica Kincaid, Grace Paley and even U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, a famously gentle ironist not generally known for making political stands. It's one thing when such notably engaged writers as Rich or Ferlinghetti speak out, but when protest extends to the very mainstream of American poetry, we can assuredly say that the conscience of a nation has been pricked.

Hayden Carruth, Ursula K. Le Guin, Galway Kinnell and Lawrence Ferlinghetti are four American writers who have been in the vanguard of that conscience for decades. With thanks to Sam Hamill and Poets Against the War, we reprint their poems here as living examples of "Poetry and the American Voice." ■

## Complaint and Petition

Mr. President: On a clear cold morning I address you from a remote margin of your dominion in plain-style Yankee quatrains because

I don't know your exalted language of power. I'm thankful for that. This is a complaint and petition, sent to you in the long-held right I claim

As a citizen. To recapitulate your wrong-doings is unnecessary; the topic is large and prominent and already occupies the attention of historians

and political scholars, whose findings will in the near future expose your incontinent and maniacal ambition for all to see. Let it suffice to

say that you have warped the law and flouted the will and wisdom of the people as no other has before you. You have behaved precisely as a tin-pot

tyrant in any benighted, inglorious corner of the earth. And now you are deviously and corruptly manipulating events in order to create war.

Let us speak plainly. You wish to murder millions, as you yourself have said, to appease your fury. We oppose such an agenda—we, the people,

artists, artisans, builders, makers, honest American men and women, especially the poets, for whom I dare to speak. We say, desist, resign,

hide yourself in your own shame, lest otherwise the evil you have loosed will destroy everything and love will quit the world.

—Hayden Carruth

more poems on page 29

